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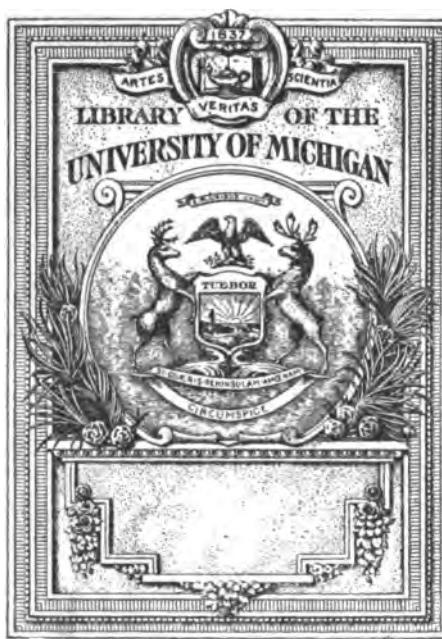
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LIFE AND LETTERS  
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HENRY LEE HIGGINSON  
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LIFE AND LETTERS  
OF  
HENRY LEE HIGGINSON











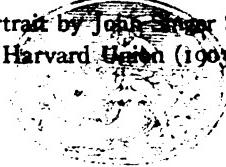
Henry L. Meiggs, Jr.

MEMOIRS AND LETTERS

HENRY LEE WIGGINSON

BOSTON: Houghtaling

From the Portrait by John Singer Sargent  
in the Harvard Union (1903)



WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

THE ATLANTIC MONTHLY PRESS  
BOSTON

From the Future of the Single-Sex  
in the Human Brain (2002)

LIFE AND LETTERS  
OF  
HENRY LEE HIGGINSON

BY  
BLISS PERRY



WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

THE ATLANTIC MONTHLY PRESS  
BOSTON

**Copyright, 1921, by  
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TO  
HENRY LEE HIGGINSON  
GRANDSON AND NAMESAKE  
OF THE NOBLE GENTLEMAN WHOSE LIFE  
IS HERE TOLD  
THIS VOLUME IS DEDICATED

385802



## PREFACE

THE material for a life of Henry Lee Higginson is abundant. He had a fondness for keeping letters and memoranda, and the correspondence to which I have had access is enormous in quantity, and covers a period of more than seventy years. During both of his long sojourns in Europe, in his youth, he kept diaries, as he did for a while during the Civil War; and later in life he dictated some vivid Reminiscences. He was passionately devoted to his friends, and wrote them with the greatest frankness; and among his correspondents — who were equally frank — were some of the most interesting men of his generation.

In the earlier chapters I have drawn freely upon his correspondence with his father, George Higginson, and upon Henry's European diaries. The Civil War chapters utilize many hitherto unpublished letters from Charles Francis Adams, Greely S. Curtis, and other army comrades. In telling the story of Major Higginson's adventures with oil-wells in Ohio and with a cotton plantation in Georgia, during 1865 and 1866, I have had the assistance of Mrs. Higginson's diaries. In giving an account of the early years of Lee, Higginson and Co., I have been permitted to use an unpublished sketch of the history of the firm, by the late Professor Barrett Wendell. The chapter on the founding of the Boston Symphony Orchestra could scarcely have been written without the aid of the History of the Orchestra by M. A. DeWolfe Howe. In the chapter dealing with Major Higginson's relations with Harvard and other colleges, I have been particularly aided by his correspondence with President Eliot, President Lowell, Dean Briggs, and Professor William James. Henry Adams was another lifelong friend whose letters are frequently quoted, and Major Higginson's interest in public

affairs is well illustrated by his correspondence with Charles Elliott Perkins and Senator Henry Cabot Lodge. During the period of the World War, Major Higginson wrote, if possible, more vigorously than ever; and I have given much space to his letters about the Orchestra in 1917 and 1918, and to his delightful correspondence with his many friends in England.

My thanks are due, not only to the persons who have placed their letters from and to Major Higginson so generously at my disposal, but also to many of his friends who have assisted me in the preparation of this biography, especially to President Eliot, President Lowell, Dr. Henry P. Walcott, John T. Morse, Jr., Dr. W. Sturgis Bigelow, Professor F. W. Taussig, James J. Storrow, M. A. DeWolfe Howe, Judge Frederick P. Cabot, and Philip Hale. Above all, I wish to thank Mrs. Higginson for her tireless and generous assistance in collecting and arranging her husband's letters, and in aiding me in every possible way. Both Mrs. Higginson and her son, Captain A. Henry Higginson, have kindly read this volume in manuscript. The index has been prepared by my friend Mr. George B. Ives.

B. P.

CAMBRIDGE, *May, 1921.*





## ILLUSTRATIONS

HENRY L. HIGGINSON . . . . .	<i>Frontispiece</i>
<i>From the portrait by John Singer Sargent</i>	
MR. AND MRS. GEORGE HIGGINSON . . . . .	16
HENRY L. HIGGINSON . . . . .	28
<i>Class photograph (1855)</i>	
H. L. HIGGINSON, MAJOR OF CAVALRY, U.S. ARMY (1863) . . . . .	176
THE ARMY FRIENDS COMMEMORATED BY SOLDIERS FIELD . . . . .	332
HENRY L. HIGGINSON . . . . .	420
<i>From a photograph by Notman (about 1905)</i>	
HENRY L. HIGGINSON . . . . .	480
<i>From a crayon portrait by John S. Sargent (1911)</i>	



# LIFE AND LETTERS OF HENRY LEE HIGGINSON

## CHAPTER I

### THE "COMBINED INFLUENCE"

"And no less was the good metal in our Higginson." — COTTON MATHER,  
*Malia*, 1702.

"No, my friends, I go always (other things being equal) for the man who inherits family traditions and the cumulative humanities of at least four or five generations." — HOLMES, *The Autocrat of the Breakfast-Table*.

"It is singular how little we really know of our relations," wrote Henry Lee Higginson to his father, when he was not quite eighteen, "and it is still more singular what family views we are inclined to take of anything or body or idea. The family delivers some opinion and the rest of us are expected to agree without a demur . . . . Mother had ideas of her own, and did not succumb to the family. If you ask who is the family, it is pretty hard to answer, but there certainly is a sort of combined influence which is produced from no one person or particular persons, which is very healthy and sound and beneficial, but which needs something new. Boston is not the world, nor Bostonians always right. I'm a New Yorker, thank Heaven! and I believe have always had my eyes open to the fact that Boston was but a dot on this earth. I hope you will not think me bitter or ungrateful, or that I'm set up in these ideas by anyone else. Very far from it. I must be allowed my own opinions, and one of them is that the family might be improved, tho' it is about the best I know. Love to all.

"Your affectionate son, H."

In Boston, that mere "dot on this earth," as it seemed to this frank young man in 1852, no one could have questioned the soundness of the Higginson stock. It had been rooted in the hard Massachusetts soil for nine generations. It had bred clergymen, seamen, soldiers, administrators, and merchants: a prolific, generous, stubborn race, not slow to wrath, and honest as the sunlight.

The first two American generations of this old English family, and the sixth, had been the most distinguished in the public eye. Most famous of the line was the pioneer emigrant, Reverend Francis Higginson, whom Cotton Mather called "the first in a catalogue of heroes." Born at Claybrooke in Leicestershire, where his father, the Reverend John Higginson, was vicar for fifty-three years, Francis Higginson, like his father before him, was educated at Jesus College, Cambridge. Taking the degrees of B.A. in 1609, and M.A. in 1613, he became a notable preacher at Leicester. "The blades of the Laudian faction," says Cotton Mather, informed against him for his Nonconformist principles; and being invited by the Governor and Company of Massachusetts Bay to emigrate with them, he came over with his wife and eight children, in the Talbot, in 1629, sailing April 25 from Gravesend, and arriving in Salem Harbor on June 29. His "Journal of the Voyage" and his description of "New England's Plantation" are well known to antiquarians. Historians of the Puritan movement in England and America have had much to say concerning Francis Higginson's peculiar ordination as teacher of the Salem church, and of the probable influence of Dr. Samuel Fuller, a physician from the Plymouth Colony, in encouraging Endicott and the Salem authorities in this complete break with the traditions of English sacerdotalism, and in the establishment of a new and independent type of Congregationalism.

But it is the personal quality of Francis Higginson, rather than his ecclesiastical significance, which fascinates the reader who already knows something of Henry Lee Higginson, his

lineal descendant of the ninth generation. It is not certain whether the portrait of "Francis Higginson" preserved in the State House at Boston<sup>1</sup> is really of Francis or of his son John; and it may represent John Wheelwright. It is a serious, kindly, wistful face, with firm nose and chin, as befits "the Argonauts of the first decade of New England," among whom, as the literary historian Tyler thought, "there was perhaps no braver or more exquisite spirit than Francis Higginson." The Salem tradition represents him as "slender and erect, but not tall." Cotton Mather credits him with "a most charming voice, which rendered him unto his hearers, in all his exercises, another Ezekiel, for 'Lo, he was unto them as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice and can play well upon an instrument.'"

Major Higginson's friends in the Tavern Club, where he presided nobly for a score of years, chaffed him occasionally for his apostasy from the Reverend Francis Higginson's example of "demonstrating the sinfulness of health-drinking"; but the Puritan blood told in 1917, when Major Higginson, at a meeting of the Saturday Club, moved in pungent and flashing phrases that the Club give up wines at its dinners in war-time, and send the money to Serbian and Armenian refugees. The Reverend Francis Higginson, who thought that a "sup of New England's air is better than a whole draught of Old England's ale," would have listened to that little speech with pleasure. And being, according to Cotton Mather, "not only a good man full of faith, but also a good man full of work . . . very serviceable to the education of scholars," and "very useful in forwarding and promoting of contributions," Francis Higginson would have found Henry Lee Higginson, of Soldiers Field and the Harvard Union, a true scion of the old stock.

Francis died at forty-three, after little more than one year's

<sup>1</sup> Reproduced in Thomas Wentworth Higginson's *Descendants of the Reverend Francis Higginson* (privately printed, 1910); and discussed in Thomas Wentworth Higginson's *Life of Francis Higginson* (New York, 1891), pp. 131-33, and in C. K. Bolton's *Portraits of the Founders* (1919), pp. 504, 650.

residence in Salem. His son John, the head of the family in the second American generation, lived to be ninety-three, having preached in his father's Salem pulpit for nearly fifty years. It was he who wrote the Preface to Cotton Mather's "Magnalia," and who, as his descendant Colonel T. W. Higginson liked to point out, courageously supported, at the age of ninety, Judge Samuel Sewall's protest against the African slave trade. Anti-slavery may not be "the blood," as Emerson once affirmed, but it was certainly in the blood of the Higginsons.

In the third and fourth generations the Higginsons were Salem merchants and seafarers. "Colonel John" begat "Captain John," Captain John begat Stephen, and Stephen, a prosperous, book-loving man of business, who married a Cabot, begat that Honorable Stephen Higginson, of the sixth generation, whose life has been entertainingly written by his grandson, Colonel T. W. Higginson. He was a notable and delightful personage. As a leading American ship-master, he had the glory of being examined by Edmund Burke before a Committee of Parliament in 1771; he was a member of the Continental Congress; helped to put down Shays' Rebellion; was "the first to suggest that the voices of nine out of the thirteen states could make the Confederacy into a Nation"; and as Navy Agent gave valuable assistance in organizing the American Navy under Jefferson's administration. Politically he was a stanch Federalist. Like his friend and kinsman George Cabot, he was a member of the famous "Essex Junto," and was the reputed author of the "Laco" letters directed against John Hancock. He amassed a large fortune as a Boston merchant, but lost heavily, like so many of his friends, in the war of 1812. He lived to the age of 85, dying in his country house in Brookline, in 1828.

Among the Honorable Stephen's ten children was the Stephen who became, after financial reverses, the "steward," or bursar, of Harvard University and the father of Colonel T. W.

Higginson of the "Cheerful Yesterdays." Anotherson, George, a Boston merchant, noted for benevolence, or what was then called "philanthropy," named his eldest son, born in 1804, after himself. It is this George Higginson of 1804, in the eighth generation from Francis, who in due time married Mary Cabot Lee, and became the father of Henry Lee Higginson.

We have already quoted the boy's letter: "If you ask who is the family, it is pretty hard to answer, but there certainly is a sort of combined influence." To one who surveys, however briefly, the record of the successive generations of Higginsons, a purely English stock transplanted to Massachusetts Bay and sharing in the typical New England achievements and character for two hundred years, the "combined influence" is not doubtful. Piety, courage, beneficence, patriotism, and a keen sense of personal honor were the traditions of the House. The schoolmates of George Higginson's four boys in the eighteen-forties and fifties would not, probably, have put "piety" first in the list of family characteristics; for these youngest Higginsons, like Stevenson's Alan Breck Stewart, were "bonny fighters," with a gift for picturesque language, and free from any odor of sanctity. But the Puritan blood was there.

In some fragmentary Reminiscences, dictated in 1918, at the age of 84, Major Higginson gave the following account of his boyhood:—

I was born in Amity Street (now Fourth Street), New York City, on the 18th of November, 1834, my father and mother being George and Mary Higginson. I can remember that I, with my two brothers, used to play in Washington Square, which was a little north of where we lived. We used to be taken to Boston each summer, and I remember now being on the Sound boat and feeling rather queer one morning. Later I recognized that it was seasickness. I have a dim recollection of the great fire in New York, which was in 1836.

In my fourth year we moved to Boston, as my father, who

had been in business with his cousin (Stephen Higginson) as a small commission merchant, failed in the great panic of 1837. Then we lived in a very small house in Chauncy Place. Father carried on a very small commission business on India Wharf in Boston. We lived in the narrowest way, and got on very well; went into a house a little bit larger in Bedford Place; went to a good school, then to the Latin School, and had a pleasant boyhood. Everything was done in a very small way, and my father and mother both worked pretty hard. My father was one of thirteen children, was put at work at the age of twelve in an office, and stayed in business until 1874, when he was seventy years old. He was a very kindly, industrious, sensible man, with a remarkable "nose" for character, scrupulously honest, and disinterested to a high degree. When he was earning very little money, he passed much of his time and any spare pennies possible in charitable work.

My mother was unusually intelligent and attractive, as I now know from the various older men and younger men who used to come to our house and dine. We had meat — chiefly corned beef — about five times in the week at dinner, had no butter, never saw an egg, had plenty of potatoes, and baked apples, and milk.

I did fairly well at the Latin School, where the tuition cost nothing, but was presently taken away because of colds and headaches, which came very often and which interfered with my work. After one year at a private school, I was sent back to the Latin School, and did much better. I remember studying hard and getting my lessons with effort, but still with determination, because it pleased my mother. I cannot remember that they gave me any particular pleasure, or that I understood them; for in those days our teachers explained nothing, and, as I see it, taught us nothing; they made us learn, and made us recite, and if we did not do it, we were punished. It was a pretty poor system. The discipline was severe, but wholesome.

We used to play on the Common or in the little court in Bedford Place, where we lived, and I kept up with most of the boys, seeing chiefly the three Paine boys who lived close by us, and various others, among them Charles Lowell, who was just my age and as bright as I was stupid. He and I went everywhere together, coasted on the Common, skated, cut up all sorts of pranks; and with him was James Savage, who was a year or two older, but who was with us all the time.

While at the Latin School I got two prizes, being prompted thereto by my desire to please my mother, who was delighted with my success; but I cannot remember that I ever cared about it myself.

We all took some interest in public affairs, and when the Revolution of 1848 came in Europe, it interested us much. I had a very strong feeling about our country, was very proud of it, thought nothing too good for it, thought it had no faults, could not conceive of living under any other government, and was delighted with the revolutions in Europe.

By and by I was taken away from the Latin School again, because my eyes were weak. Each summer we had been taken out to some neighboring town, and lived in a farmer's house or some little cottage and had a pleasant life in summer. We had our little gardens in which we worked, and would pick apples from the trees where we lived in the various towns — Watertown, Newton, and West Cambridge, which is now Belmont. All this was very good for us.

In the year 1849, when I was fifteen years old, my mother died, in August. She had had tuberculosis for some time, and it had increased and increased, and nothing could be done to save her. It was a terrible blow to my father, and of course very bad for us all, but we lived along and did the best we could.

My mates went to college in 1850, and I wished to go too, but my eyes had been weak, and I had been taken away from school and put under the care of a tutor, who said I would not be ready for college before 1851.

We were all taking a good deal of interest in the slavery question at that time, and to me it appealed very much. Very many of the people whom we naturally saw, old and young, in Boston, were interested in cotton manufactures and had many friends in the South, and did not share the strong feeling that we held about slavery. I remember that we boys used to go down to Fanueil Hall to hear the meetings for and against slavery. But my feeling about it was very strong. Mr. Webster made his great speech about the fugitive slave law just at that time, and excited thereby great dislike as well as great admiration. Somehow or other, from early days I had had the feelings of a "reformer," and those feelings grew with me.

I went to college in 1851, with a very good lot of fellows, among whom was Phillips Brooks, with whom I had been at school some years: Alex Agassiz, George Dexter, and many others. After six months, I again broke down. My eyes were too sick to study and, after a few months, I was sent to Europe.

This crisp narrative is characteristic, and renders admirably an old man's retrospect; yet many details must be filled in, if we are to picture the circumstances and the spirit of his boyhood. We must understand something of his father and mother, of the swarm of relatives and friends who formed the social atmosphere of his youth; and we must go back in imagination to the pleasant Boston town of the eighteen-forties — vanished now as utterly as Thebes and Troy.

The dominant influence in the first thirty years of Henry Higginson's life was that of his father. George Higginson, from early manhood until his death at 85 in 1889, seemed to his contemporaries to belong somehow to the "old school." Short of stature, — like his sons, — muscular, merry-eyed, very carefully dressed, studiously and proudly "mercantile" in his business hours, a stanch Whig and Unitarian, admirer of Emerson and reader of Dickens and Thackeray, passionately attached

to his home and children and kinsfolk, an upright, laborious, and unselfish gentleman, George Higginson was a glorious example of the English virtue of somehow "winning through."

Many thanks for your portrait [wrote his son Henry from Vienna in May, 1858]; it is a very excellent likeness. A touch of gray in the hair and whiskers and a few wrinkles to show that you are no longer young, a half-smile and a half-joke in your eyes to signify the fun of your nature, the pleasantest mouth in the world with its very best expression, your chin beaming a bit, your nose to settle your destiny, your modern cravat with a large tie in contrast with your ancient diminutive square knot, and your double-breasted waistcoat to prove your keeping up with the age and not becoming an old fogey, your Puritanism peeping out in the shirt of two plaits, your hair-chain — it is all capital, the real old daddy. Anyone can see how you scrub your face every morning from the way it shines.

On September 18 of that year he writes again:—

DEAR OLD DADDY:—

You're fifty-four years old to-day. A jolly day to you and many returns of the same. I know that you hope to die early, but you're in for twenty and perhaps thirty more years. Make them as pleasant as possible for yourself. If you only take a little care of yourself you'll always be well and strong; and that is the principal thing. Much satisfaction and joy in your children; they've not borne early fruits, but early strawberries are sour. The apple is our best Northern fruit, but it takes all summer to ripen it. We find flowers in April and May, but the rose, the queen of flowers, comes in June. May your daughter prove a rose. Forty years you have worked daily in a counting-room, and the result is as fair and honorable a name as ever man had. Twenty-five years you've watched over and cared

for us every minute of the day and night. You 've done a good deal, old daddy, and we all are thankful to you for your care and love, and are proud of you as a father and a man.

And the birthday letter of 1859 must also be quoted:—

VIENNA, Sept. 18, 1859.

DEAREST FATHER:—

A happy birthday to you and may we see many more fall on your dear old head. Fifty-five years is our jolly daddy; when he is seventy-five and his children with gray hairs are standing around him, may he look with more satisfaction on his past life than he now does. You will probably have a jollification with Mr. Forbes to-day. Are you still as troubled as formerly about eating too much and getting fat? How you did starve yourself in those times; ate one soup a week and drank two cups of coffee. Speaking of gray hairs, I plucked a white hair, silvery white, from my beard the other day, and have some more on my head.

A hundred traits in the father's character — whimsical, pious, stubborn, solicitous — will appear in the correspondence printed in later chapters; but no better summary of them is likely to be written than that penned by Colonel Henry Lee, his brother-in-law, in 1889.<sup>1</sup>

"Mr. Higginson was preëminent in those qualities which entitle a man to love and respect. He had been tried by adversity and prosperity, and subdued by neither; he was liberal — nay, prodigal — of his time and his money in the service of all who were 'distressed in mind, body, or estate.' He waited not for wealth, but gave from his penury as afterwards from his abundance. He believed in the payment of debts with interest, no matter how outlawed by time, or how excusably incurred; and he paid for others who were disabled, as for himself. You

<sup>1</sup> Reprinted in J. T. Morse's *Memoir of Henry Lee* (Boston, 1905), p. 348.

have heard of men fleeing from their taxes, leaving them to be paid by their poorer neighbors; but Mr. Higginson, not content with paying as doomed, complained to the assessors, and insisted on their doubling his tax. . . .

"At one period of the war, when one of his sons was lying dangerously wounded, another in Libby Prison, while a third was with his regiment in South Carolina, ill of malarial fever, he repelled the condolences of a Copperhead friend whose sons had been harbored at home, saying emphatically that he would not exchange places, and that he stood in no need of pity. Such was his standard of patriotism. To enumerate his beneficiaries would be impossible, as no human being stood near enough to him to ascertain their names or number; and some surprising revelations have been made by those assisted. His habit of living, like his habit of giving, was liberal and unostentatious. An old-fashioned simplicity, in which he had been bred, he maintained through life, combined with an unbounded hospitality. An uncle of mine, who was at Andover Academy with the father and uncles of Mr. Higginson, said of them that they were the heartiest laughers and the fiercest fighters, and these traits have come down with the blood.

"I fear that some solemn occasions, like the funerals of distant relatives, have been disturbed or threatened by the outbursts of Mr. Higginson and his cousin Stephen, so akin are tears and laughter in persons of quick sympathy and keen sense of humor. He was also quick to resent an injury, and exploded instantaneously upon the least hint of imposition or baseness, or of brazen intrusiveness. . . .

"A stranger, meeting him in the street, would conclude from his downcast look and his drooping gait that he was dejected; and so he was, for his early orphanage, the vicissitudes of his life, the loss of his wife, — of whom he could never speak but with tears, — had left sad memories. But the face of a friend, the sight of a little child, would transform him in an instant. His face would light up with cordiality, and his sighs be

followed by words of affection or peals of laughter; for he was very human; his blood was warm within, and his heart most susceptible of joy or sorrow, of affection or anger. This impressibility made him hasty and sometimes unjust; and his tenaciousness, or what he laughed over as his obstinacy, tended to stereotype his first impressions; but, as a rule, his judgments were to be relied on. Without the power to render his reasons, the habits of a long life of right feeling and good acting gave him an instinctive insight into character, a sense of danger or security which made him a safe guide.

"I have been intimately associated with Mr. Higginson for near sixty years, and I have never known a more upright, more warm-hearted, more disinterested man."

Mary Cabot Lee, Henry Higginson's mother, was born on August 16, 1811, the daughter of Henry Lee the elder and Mary Jackson. She married George Higginson on November 1, 1832, bore him five children,<sup>1</sup> and died August 26, 1849. The affection and admiration which she inspired still make vivid her memory. "You speak of your mother," wrote her brother Colonel Henry Lee to Henry Higginson in 1893; "she was born with too clear sight for comfort, she toiled to accomplish, for those she loved, impossibilities, and died of the over-strain." Her birthday is constantly recalled in the correspondence of her husband and her children.

It is mother's birthday once more [writes Henry to his father from St. Helier, Jersey, on August 16, 1860]; her forty-ninth birthday. What a long time since you were married! Jimmy says in a late letter to me that, if she had lived, she would have kept the family together now, after dear grandmother's death, as no one else can do it. She would surely have done so, for no one in the world had a greater faculty in these

<sup>1</sup> George Higginson, born Aug. 6, 1833, died June 19, 1921; Henry Lee Higginson, born Nov. 18, 1834, died Nov. 14, 1919; James Jackson Higginson, born June 19, 1836, died Nov. 11, 1911; Mary Lee Higginson (Mrs. S. Parkman Blake), born Sept. 5, 1838; Francis Lee Higginson, born Oct. 11, 1841.

little social matters. I can remember distinctly several small parties at our house, and how easy and agreeable they were. She was too, if I mistake not greatly, a favorite with your whole family, high and low, young and old, and this proves in no small degree her great social gifts, for the Higginson tribunal is not an easy one to pass.

I've inherited from both parents [wrote Henry Higginson in 1883] the belief that one cannot escape with honor from the duties of a citizen. . . . Do you suppose that as a child I did not heed the words of my mother about slavery?

Too clear-sighted for comfort, as her brother said, was this descendant of Anne Hutchinson. Mr. J. T. Morse remembers her as "ill and feeble, lying on the sofa, while a noisy rout of boys frolicked through the house, and she all the while smiled gently, making no plea for quiet."

There is a charming letter from Mrs. William Channing ("Cousin Julia") to George Higginson, in May, 1858, in which she speaks of having met his son James in Europe. "It was curious to me, who have seen so little of James since he was a fine baby, to contrast the dark Spanish head before me with that delicate little image of twenty years ago. Yet the crisp brown hair of manhood has the same trick of falling over the brow as the soft golden curl that strayed there then, and I could almost sketch from memory the little infant face in its loveliness, with another bending in tender love over it, the soft brown curls half shading it from sight. You will pardon me and not think it indelicate that I recall this touching memory."

All the allusions in the family correspondence confirm the lines of that picture of the delicate, worn young mother, hater of injustice, lover of books, lover of music, lover and giver of life.

That sense of kinship which is still a marked feature of the older Boston families flowered to perfection in the Higginsons.

Their clan was a prolific one, and by a long series of inter-marriages they were allied to an amazing number of Old Boston families: Cabots, Lees, Jacksons, Lowells, Channings, Perkinses, Tyngs, Storrows, Putnams, Morses, Paines, all called them "cousins."<sup>1</sup> With the Lees, who were associated in business with George Higginson after 1848,—when the firm of Lee and Higginson was founded,—their associations were peculiarly intimate. "Grandfather Henry Lee" and "Grandmother Lee," the maternal grandparents of the young Higginsons, counted for more in their childhood than did the paternal grandparents; for George Higginson's father had died early, and his mother, marrying a younger brother of her husband, had absorbing family cares of her own. But Lees and Higginsons alike spread gradually beyond the confines of Boston and Brookline, to Beverly and the North Shore, to Brattleboro, and even to Westport on Lake Champlain, where the Lees early fixed a habitation, which figures rapturously as "the Lake" in the boyish letters of Henry Higginson and his brothers.

George Higginson, who, as his son often said, never owned a house or a horse of his own until within a few years of his death, lived after his return from New York, in 1837, in various rented houses in Boston, West Cambridge, and Brookline. The homes in Chauncy Place and at No. 2 Bedford Place were typical,—each in a little nest of dwellings inhabited chiefly by kinsfolk,—"one of those cosey little courts," wrote Colonel Henry Lee, "which were favorite retreats for families on intimate terms with each other and a little aloof from the great world. On one side of Bedford Place, for so was the court named, was the house and garden of my uncle, Judge Jackson, then august, though only forty-five years old. On the other side all six houses were owned and occupied by our family and near of kin." In a letter to Sarah Orne Jewett, Colonel Lee gives another sketch of the social surroundings in which the young Higginsons passed their boyhood:—

<sup>1</sup> See T. W. Higginson's *Life of Francis Higginson*, p. 150.

"In Boston in my boyhood the houses were for the most part detached garden houses; there was no quarter for the rich; they and the poor, successful and unsuccessful members of the same family, perhaps, — at least of the same stock, — dwelt in the same quarter; there were only enough foreigners to exercise benevolence on, not to intrude; families and friends built courts (no thoroughfares) to dwell in together, and there was a personal recognition and coöperation in all affairs, — social, municipal, ecclesiastical, educational, — which was wholesome. We all lived in this little world; all our work and all our play were there."

If one stands to-day in the sunless, hideous canyon of Chauncy Street, between Bedford and Summer Streets, he will realize how utterly the pleasant little world of Henry Higginson's boyhood has vanished. This portion of Chauncy Street did not become a thoroughfare until 1856. In the eighteen-forties its westerly half, a court running eastward from Bedford Street, was known as Bedford Place. A brick wall, and afterward a chain and posts, surmounted by an iron arch bearing a lamp-post, divided Bedford Place from Chauncy Place, which opened into Summer Street. Summer Street, at that time, deserved its name. It was a winding river of elm and horse-chestnut trees and sunshine, bordered with beautiful houses, lawns, and gardens — the homes of merchant princes and of Daniel Webster. Chauncy Place and Bedford Place were like quiet eddies of this stately stream. On the northerly side of Chauncy Street was the First Church, where Emerson's father had been minister. Then came the Chauncy Hall School, and beyond it, marking the transition to Bedford Place, Judge Charles Jackson's house, with its perfect doorway, and the great pear garden, beyond which could be seen the walls of the Second Church.<sup>1</sup>

Opposite this garden, on the south side of Bedford Place,

<sup>1</sup> See Dr. James Jackson Putnam's *Memoir of Dr. James Jackson* (Boston, 1906), p. 114.

were the dwellings of the clansmen. George Higginson lived for many years in No. 2, flanked by Lees and Paines; and there were Lowells and Jacksons and Morses for good company. After a while, George Higginson moved a few doors east on Chauncy Place, near Dr. Henry Bigelow; and when the city changed Bedford Place and Chauncy Place into Chauncy Street, in 1856, his house became No. 22 Chauncy Street.

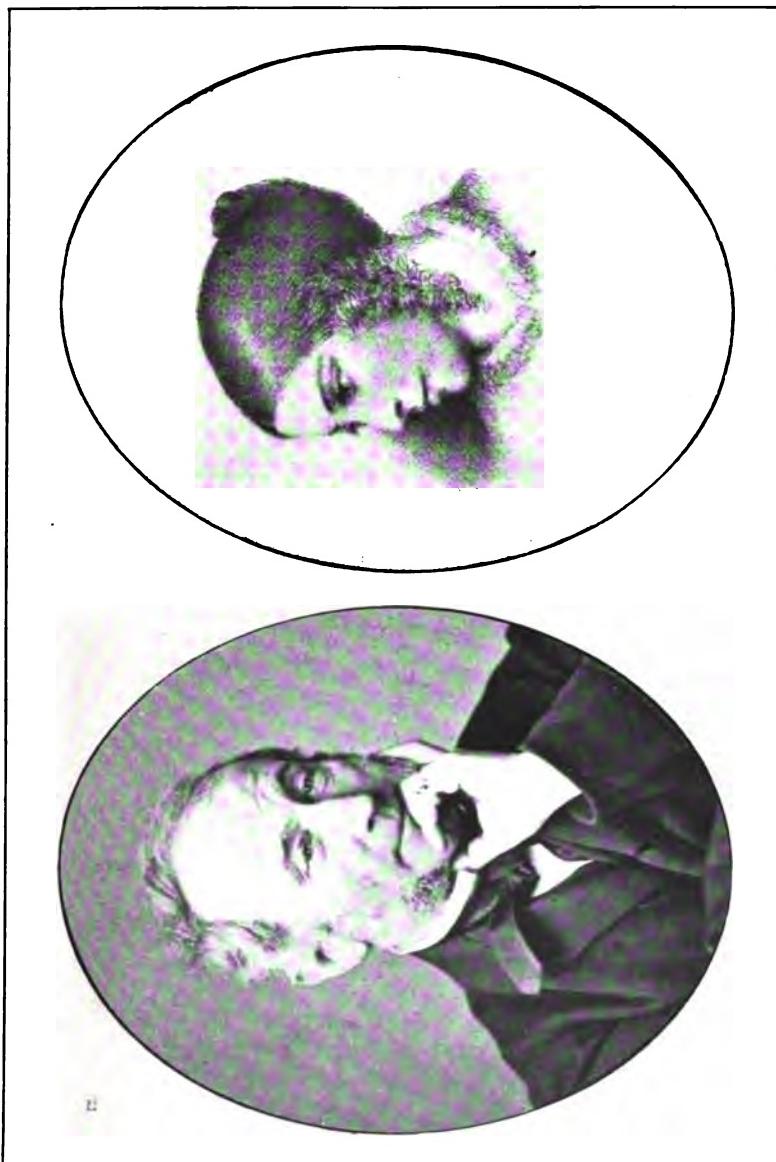
It was a community of kinsfolk in a deeper sense than is implied in mere relationship by marriage. When George Higginson's children were born, Boston had a homogeneous society. "The great Irish and German emigrations," says Edmund Quincy,<sup>1</sup> "had not then set in. The city was eminently English in its character and appearance, and probably no town of its size in England had a population of such unmixed English descent as the Boston of forty years ago. It was *Anglis ipsis Anglior* — more English than the English themselves." This remark is just as true of the Higginsons and Lees, — who, like the Jacksons, Cabots, and Lowells, had migrated into Boston from Essex County, — as it was of the families who had lived in Boston since the seventeenth century.

But the decade of Henry Higginson's birth saw the beginnings of a vast change.<sup>2</sup> The eighteen-thirties were like one of those fine days which born New Englanders cannot help regarding as weather-breeders. Some of the older Bostonians were quite aware that the golden weather could not last. George Ticknor, writing in 1863, thus refers to a remark made to him a generation earlier: —

<sup>1</sup> *Life of Josiah Quincy* (Boston, 1868), p. 396.

<sup>2</sup> "The break between the old and the new came some time in the thirties, and 1850 was well within the new period. Yet at that date this new period was still very new, hardly more than a dozen years old, and the ideas of the earlier time — the habits, the modes of life, although mortally smitten and fast fading — were still felt, still dominant. The men and women of the elder time with the old feelings and habits were, of course, very numerous, and for the most part were quite unconscious that their world was slipping away from them. Hence the atmosphere of our old stone house, with its lane, its pear-trees, and its garden nymph, indeed of Boston itself, was still an eighteenth-century atmosphere." Henry Cabot Lodge, *Early Memories* (New York, 1913), p. 16.

MR. AND MRS. GEORGE HIGGINSON





"Dr. Bowditch said to me, above thirty years ago, in a manner so impressive that I remember the spot where we stood, and rarely pass it without recalling the circumstances: 'We are living in the best days of the republic. That the worst will follow soon does not seem to me very likely. But nations advance, and thrive, and die, like men; and can no more have a second youth than their inhabitants can.'"<sup>1</sup>

Long before the great fire of 1872 swept over Summer Street, that pleasant Boston world which Summer Street epitomized and symbolized had begun its passing. Henry Higginson was to live to see it all: the decay of the old commerce, the growth of mills and railroads, the War, the development of the West, the fierce surge of immigration, new social and economic and political forces submerging and obliterating the Boston of his youth. But his affection for the city was invincible by any change, and it is pleasant to find that his very earliest letters have to do with Boston Common! These letters date from January and February, 1846, when his brother James, to whom he was writing, was exiled temporarily at Newton Lower Falls. "The coasting which was down Park Street on the sidewalk next the Common was spoilt this morning while we were in school by being strewed with ashes from the top to the bottom and all the fun is in snowballing and what little coasting there is. . . . Mother gave me two half sticks of candy of different kinds this evening and I have sent them to you. If you would like some newspapers to read, or books, write to me and say so and I will send them out to you."

This letter is typical: —

*Sunday, Jan. 25th, 1846.*

My dear James father says he could make no use of a cigar and I think I shall not get one and neither George nor I want to spend any money except for a looking glass which he happened to break by throwing a slipper at me up in our room and we wish to have it mended and pay for it ourselves as it was

<sup>1</sup> *Life and Letters of George Ticknor*, vol. II, p. 464.

partly my fault. We have got some coasting and I looked at the pond this morning as I went up Beacon Street and it looked as if it had very little snow upon it but still I believe there has been nobody skating there. There was some coasting down the great coast but it was nearly worn down yesterday at 11 o'clock. To-day I saw that there had been coasting down Park Street mall after I left it. It is so warm to-day that it is melting every where and a great deal of snow is tumbling off the houses and the glass at about 3 o'clock was at 46 or 47. Mr. Peabody <sup>1</sup> christened 4 babies at 9 A.M. After reading the first part he took cousin Lydia's baby and christened it Sarah. Then he took cousin Harriet Minot's and christened it Sarah Cabot. Next cousin Lucy Morse's oldest and christened it Charles Jackson. Next her youngest and christened it Eben Rollins. Uncle Frank is quite well he wears moustaches and a long beard and he has got one of those great pearl buttons as big as a circle cut out of the palm of your hand but he did not wear it to-day. He wore a blue one. He said there were lots of bows and arrows coming home for us and his birds are coming home with Gordon Dexter. We are going to have no war it is thought as Sir Robert Peel is taken back into the ministry and he is for peace. Aunt likes her music-box very much but I have not seen it and she says I must come in and see it to-morrow evening. I went to dancing school yesterday afternoon as usual and as there was a meeting of the classes it was very full and we had to stand for the last 2 or 3 hours we were there unless we were willing to sit down on the floor which I did part of the time I was so tired. we are all well and Frank sends a kiss and his love and George and myself also. good bye

your affectionate brother HENRY.

Sometimes, evidently, the matter of clothing the young Higginsons required prompt action, and the family dressmaker had to be prodded.

<sup>1</sup> Reverend Ephraim Peabody, minister of King's Chapel.

I went to Miss Powers Friday morning and she said her sister had not come and I do not think she will come at all. Mr. Davis had cut both our jackets out of the blue pantaloons but he had gone away and had put them away and she could not get them till Thursday, I believe. She had got my pantaloons nearly done, but I said I wanted my jacket first and so she went to work on that. She said my clothes would be done on Wednesday. Their squirrel is sick. The tall Miss Powers does not look as if she had much Power.

This is the first pun — or what "Jim" Savage and "Charley" Lowell later called a "Higgism" — in the correspondence! It is not the last.

Henry's boyish efforts to give appropriate presents within his slender allowance are illustrated by the adventure in buying a cheese-knife, apparently for his mother (July 12, 1847):—

I went to Mr. Hunt's the cutler to see about the cheese-knife, and he sent me to Jones's. Jones had none and he sent me to Bradford's. I had to wait twenty minutes there, at last they told me they had got some. I asked to see them and they showed them to me. They are just like grandmother's only there is a thing, that slips up and down, with which you push the cheese off the blade, having scooped it out. I asked if they had no plain ones (like grandmother's, that is), but he said that they had not. I then asked the price of that and he said 4 dollars. I cleared out.

*August 15, 1847.* To-day I went to Church in the morning and cousin Wentworth preached a very fine sermon. We expect him here this evening to tea and to pass the night.

The sound New England tradition of manual labor for boys was duly observed by the young Higginsons. The postscript to the letter just quoted remarks: —

This morning when I came from school I got what little ice there was off our sidewalk and aunt's and as it was quite slippery I put some hot sand on it. We were warned to do so by George's slipping upon it and bruising his eye quite badly. After I had got the ice off I went down cellar to pick over the rest of the potatoes and finished that and I was very tired with stooping over them as I had poured them out on to the floor and I was quite cold and very dirty because I went without my jacket so that I should not dirty it and I did not have any frock on. . . . I forgot to tell you that the babies were very good and quiet at the christening. Good bye

Your affectionate brother HENRY  
surnamed HAL or HARRY or  
HENRY JOSEPH.

P.S. all are well.

A letter of Henry to his sister Mary, written from Pittsfield in August, 1849, just before his mother's death, gives a pleasant picture of Dr. Holmes, who had evidently been talking to the boy on the Doctor's favorite topic of big elm trees:—

We have been over this afternoon to Dr. Holmes's house. There is a beautiful view of the hills, and woods, and of the banks of the Housatonic, but you cannot see the river. They look very well, and happy. The farm is two hundred and eighty-six acres. He has no trees round the house, and he needs them very much. There are a great many horses, cows, pigs, fowls, etc. In the town, there is an elm, that is of the ancient forest, that is when the forest that extended all over the country was cut down this tree was left, and, if you will notice, you will see that the trees growing in a wood do not throw out any limbs, till they reach the light, so this tree grew eighty-six feet high, before it threw out any limbs. You must tell Frank, that I will write him a letter pretty soon. Your affectionate brother

HENRIE L. HIGGINSON.

Henry was now half-way through a somewhat broken course at the Boston Latin School. As a small boy he had attended a neighborhood school kept by Miss Elizabeth Ripley, and then one kept by Miss Elizabeth Peabody, the sister of Mrs. Nathaniel Hawthorne. At eight he was taught by Mr. Phelps; and when his eyes failed at the Latin School, he was for a time at Reverend Mr. Eustis's farm at Blue Hill. Mr. Fred Williams also tutored him.

But the chief factor in his education was the Latin School. Founded in 1635, and thus the most ancient of American public schools, it occupied from 1844 to 1881 an ugly three-story brick building, with granite façade, on Bedford Street, not far from Bedford Place. The situation was unfavorable. The street was noisy, there was no playground, the staircases were dark, and the ventilation wretched. The head-master, Epes Sargent Dixwell, had reigned since 1836, and held office until 1851, when he established a private fitting-school on Boylston Place. Associated with him during Henry Higginson's school-life was Francis Gardner, who succeeded Dixwell as head-master. Three of the Higginson boys attended the Latin School, Henry entering in 1846, James in 1848, and Frank in 1852. Among the older boys, when Henry entered, were his friends Greely Curtis, C. W. Eliot, C. R. Lowell, W. C. Paine, J. Q. Adams, and James Savage. Phillips Brooks, Powell Mason, and R. T. Paine entered with Henry Higginson, while C. F. Adams, William Amory, and Richard Cary entered with James Higginson in 1848. Charles Adams's strictures on the Latin School are known to all readers of his "Autobiography"; and Henry Adams, who was fitted for Harvard in Mr. Dixwell's private school, has printed an unflattering picture of both school and college.

Says Charles Adams: "I was at the Latin School three years; my brother John was at it five. I loathed it, and John loathed it worse than I. Not one single cheerful or satisfactory memory is with me associated therewith. Its methods were

bad, its standards low, its rooms unspeakably gloomy. It was a dull, traditional, lifeless day-academy, in which a conventional, commonplace, platoon-front, educational drill was carried on."

Henry Higginson's language about the Latin School was certainly not affectionate. He wrote to Mrs. Agnes Fuller in 1919: "When I think of my own days at the Latin School — five years of time — and that nobody ever taught me anything, the boys being allowed to learn their lessons or not as they chose, and being punished accordingly; when I think of the waste of time and what I might have learned if I had been taught, I do not feel pleasant." He was equally incapable of the fervid school-loyalty which his friend Phillips Brooks expressed in the address at the 250th anniversary, or of the dispassionate candor with which his friend President Eliot summed up the strong and weak points of the Latin School at the 275th anniversary, in 1910. His boyish letters reveal his feeling that the teachers at the Latin School and the tutors at Harvard College — many of whom were graduates of the school — lacked nobility and generosity of character; that they cared more for books than for boys and men; that their methods of government were small and mean.

In the prescribed routine of Latin, Greek, and Mathematics he did not distinguish himself, — in spite of the "two prizes," — and probably would not have done so even if his eyes had given him no trouble. Two of his school compositions, on "Gunpowder" and "The Burial of Sir John Moore," duly corrected by his masters, were preserved among his papers. They are painstaking, but mediocre.

Yet outside the schoolroom Henry's prowess was unquestioned. In "The Education of Henry Adams" there is a record of one disastrous day.

"One of the commonest boy-games of winter, inherited directly from the eighteenth century, was a game of war on Boston Common. In old days the two hostile forces were called

North-Enders and South-Enders. In 1850 the North-Enders still survived as a legend, but in practice it was a battle of the Latin School against all comers, and the Latin School, for snowball, included all the boys of the West End. Whenever, on a half-holiday, the weather was soft enough to soften the snow, the Common was apt to be the scene of a fight, which began in daylight with the Latin School in force, rushing their opponents down to Tremont Street, and which generally ended at dark by the Latin School dwindling in numbers and disappearing. As the Latin School grew weak, the roughs and young blackguards grew strong. As long as snowballs were the only weapon, no one was much hurt, but a stone may be put in a snowball, and in the dark a stick or a slungshot in the hands of a boy is as effective as a knife. One afternoon the fight had been long and exhausting. The boy Henry, following, as his habit was, his bigger brother Charles, had taken part in the battle, and felt his courage much depressed by seeing one of his trustiest leaders, Henry Higginson, — 'Bully Hig,' his school name,— struck by a stone over the eye, and led off the field bleeding in rather a ghastly manner."

All the Higginson boys, it may be noted here, were notoriously unlucky in the matter of physical injuries; but as soon as they were patched up, they invariably tried the game again.

Oddly enough, no Higginson of the direct paternal line since Francis Higginson, the original emigrant, had held a college degree. They did not belong to what Oliver Wendell Holmes, speaking of Emerson's ancestry, called "the academic races." But "Cousin Waldo" and "Cousin Wentworth," "Uncle Harry" Lee, and many other remoter kinsmen, had been Harvard men, and George Higginson wished his sons to go to college. The eldest, George, chose what Wendell Phillips mellifluously described as "the better education of practical life," and turned farmer. It was Henry, then, who had to serve as pioneer in that perilous venture across the Charles River. His career was brief.

In a little package of Harvard souvenirs found after his death, is this blue-tinted certificate, bearing the bold autograph of Jared Sparks:—

HARVARD COLLEGE  
CERTIFICATE OF ADMISSION

CAMBRIDGE, July 16th, 1851.

H. L. HIGGINSON is admitted a member of the Freshman Class in Harvard College on probation, and on condition of passing a satisfactory examination in the following studies at the end of the Vacation:—

*Latin Composition, Compounded proportions and interest in Arithmetic and Equations in Algebra.*

JARED SPARKS  
*President.*

Henry Higginson, future banker, conditioned in "interest in arithmetic"! But into Harvard he went, for his Steward's certificate, dated August, 1851, and carefully preserved, attests that "Henry L. Higginson has complied with the law respecting admission to the *Freshman Class*." Among his classmates were several boys with whom his associations, either then or later, were intimate: Alexander Agassiz, whose sister he was to marry; S. Parkman Blake, who married Henry's sister; William Amory, F. C. Barlow, Phillips Brooks, Channing Clapp, E. B. Dalton, George Dexter, R. T. Paine, and Stephen G. Perkins. Amory, Dexter, Higginson, and Perkins all roomed at "Mr. B. F. Wyeth's." In the Sophomore class, '54, were J. C. Bancroft, C. R. Lowell, and James Savage. Among the Juniors, '53, were J. Q. Adams, Wilder Dwight, C. W. Eliot, A. S. Hill, and C. J. Paine. Joseph H. Choate and James B. Thayer were Seniors. There were only 304 students in the College proper, and a total of 631 in all departments.

In the officers of Harvard College there was surely distinction enough. In the catalogue of 1851-'52, — the only cata-

logue to bear the name of Henry L. Higginson until after 1882, when he received the honorary degree of A.M., — the list of Fellows is headed by Lemuel Shaw. Daniel Webster and Edward Everett were among the Overseers, Theophilus Parsons was teaching in the Law School, and Oliver Wendell Holmes was Dean of the Medical School. Among the professors in Harvard College proper were Longfellow and Agassiz, Asa Gray and Benjamin Peirce. Professors Felton and Sophocles taught Greek; Lane was just beginning his professorship of Latin, and Child was succeeding Edward T. Channing as Boylston Professor of Rhetoric and Oratory.

But to a freshman like Henry Higginson these shining names meant little: he recited, for better or worse, to tutors trained in the traditions already wearisome to him in the Latin School. There were the four rigidly prescribed subjects of the Freshman year, — Latin, Greek, mathematics, and a little history, — and if a boy were not a scholar by nature, it was all a treadmill round. One need not turn to the disillusioned reminiscences of the Adams brothers to be aware that Boston boys, proceeding to Harvard as a matter of course, because it was expected of them, often failed then, as they have failed in so many college generations since, to lift up their eyes to new horizons of the mind and spirit.

Except in the "football fight" on "Bloody Monday," where his exhibition of strength and skill grew into a family tradition, young Higginson made no mark. Like two others of that joyous little band at "Mr. B. F. Wyeth's," — Amory and Perkins, — he found that his eyes began to fail. Was it "exposure to the early morning air," necessitated by required Chapel, or was there no good oculist in Boston? The evidence inclines one to take the latter alternative.

At any rate, it was evident by December that the condition of the boy's eyes made it necessary for him to leave college, at least temporarily. Dr. Bethune, who was consulted, thought it might be well to try a six weeks' treatment at the then

famous "Water-Cure Establishment" of Dr. Wesselhoeft at Brattleboro, Vermont. Dr. Francis Higginson of Brattleboro was a kinsman, and there was a swarm of aunts and cousins to furnish agreeable society. Fortified against the rigors of a Vermont winter with India-rubber boots, — then a novelty, — mittens, extra blankets, and a sack of Spitzbergen apples from home, the boy seems to have endured his exile cheerfully enough, and his sister learned later that he was "an important person at the establishment." The various aunts and cousins were kind to him, and Stephen Perkins and Charles Lowell — neither of whom was then in good condition — came up to visit him for a while. But the weeks and months dragged by without any perceptible improvement. By March the furniture from his Cambridge room was stored in the garret at Bedford Place. The Harvard game was up — at least for the present.

What next? A long sea-voyage was discussed — that prescription for weak eyes having been popular among Boston youths ever since R. H. Dana's "Two Years Before the Mast" experience, some fifteen years earlier. But as the spring came on, Henry proposed a foot-journey in Germany and Switzerland. His father demurred at first, thinking that the boy's loneliness and ignorance of European languages would be serious obstacles. But he found that various Boston friends had tried the experiment successfully, George S. Hale for instance, at the cost of only \$800 for a year — and discovered in the "New York Christian Inquirer" a notice concerning a "cultivated" person in slender health who proposed to make a pedestrian tour in Europe and desired a companion. The cultivated person turned out to be a Reverend Mr. Eliot, an Orthodox clergyman of Northampton. Henry called upon him in April, on his way home from Brattleboro, and they agreed to meet in London in June, and to travel together as long as it proved mutually agreeable.

So it came to pass that the boy, still lacking six months of

his eighteenth year, sailed from New York on a Saturday afternoon in May, on board the packet Constitution, Captain Britton commanding. She was reputed to be the finest ship then sailing out of New York. George Higginson saw his son off. "I watched her from the pier till she was under way," he wrote; and then the yearning, solicitous little man hurried back to Boston, to the tiny counting-room on State Street, and the four motherless children.

## CHAPTER II

### FIRST VISIT TO EUROPE

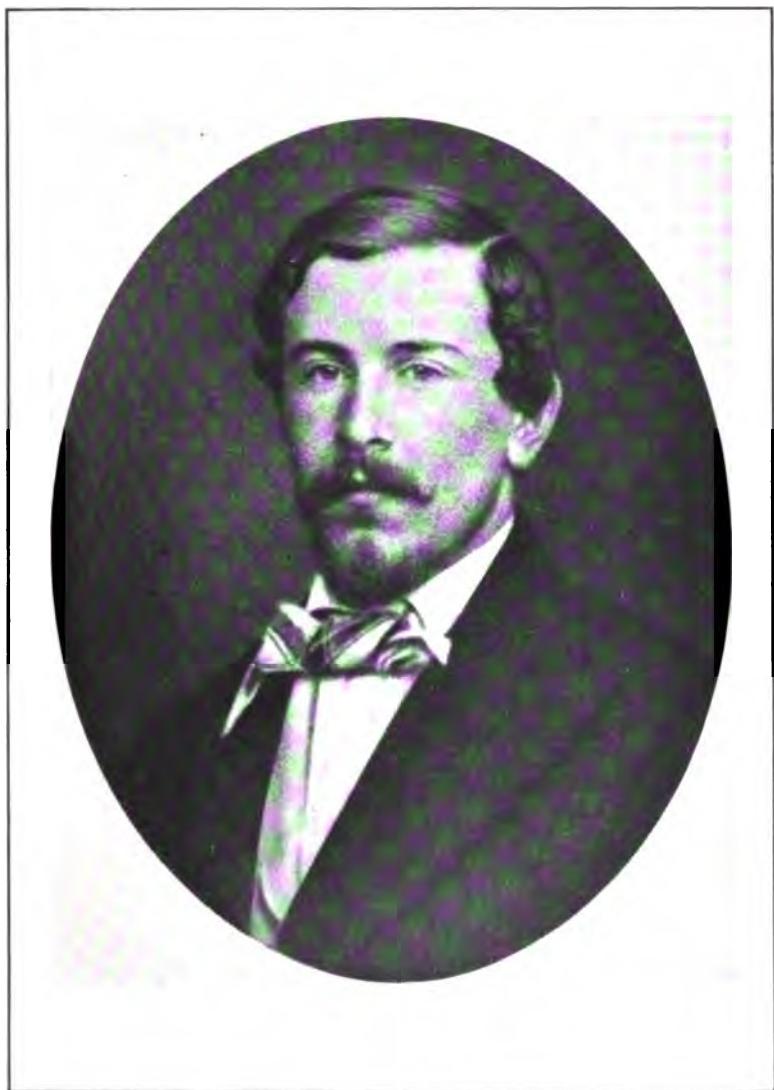
Long the quest and far the ending  
When my wayfarer is wending —  
    When desire is once afoot,  
Doom behind and dream attending!

—CHARLES G. D. ROBERTS, *Afoot.*

THE Constitution ran into fogs, calms, and head-winds, and was thirty days at sea, not reaching Liverpool until the seventh of June.

Henry's state-room companion, as he wrote in his first letter home, "was the pleasantest man on board, a young Irishman, tho' he is thoroughly English in feelings and opinions, and I am told in appearance. . . . The Captain was worried very much by our ill-luck, and there were some passengers who kept asking questions and giving advice and meddling generally. . . . I got along very pleasantly with him, as I was careful not to worry him. . . . The chief difficulty at sea is that there is nothing to do. I walked a good deal, but that is very tiresome, and I slept considerably; but the only thing in which I took any satisfaction was reading, and I felt as guilty when I was doing so as a man does when he is stealing; besides knowing that I was hurting myself. Still, I read a little when I felt very desperate, tho' I tried not to. The fact is, I do not like the sea at all." And he never did.

His English Diary begins on June 9, 1852, with the sound if not highly original observations: "Cultivation much better than American. . . . Saw castle occupied in Conqueror's time. . . . Railway stations very good. Cars not so good as



HENRY L. HIGGINSON  
Class photograph (1855)



ours." Mr. Eliot was waiting for him in the boarding-house then kept for Americans, at 142 Strand, by John Chapman, the publisher.

I was a very green boy [Higginson says in the Reminiscences dictated in 1918], saw a few people, and did not know what to do — that is, had no "shape" at all. In Boston, before going away, we had been to the Italian opera, getting there seats for twenty-five cents in the upper gallery, and enjoying it highly. I had an inborn taste for music, which was nourished by a few concerts in Boston and by the opera. It was really a great pleasure to us. In London of course the opera was better and delighted me.

In fact, after only two days of sight-seeing in London, he began going to the opera.

*June 12.* Heard Mario, Grisi, Marini, Ronconi, Polonini, Soldi, in "Puritani." Mario perfectly delicious. Best tenor, and Grisi best prima donna. Ronconi best baritone, Marini best bass I ever heard. Very impassioned acting. Splendid acting and orchestra. Everything beautiful, and splendid, and delicious. English ladies very much like ours, a little plumper. Saw one very handsome girl.

A few days later he notes: —

Grisi and Mario and Ronconi and Marini as usual. Madame Seguin fair, tho' rather poor; has a shaky sort of a way of singing that is rather in fashion now, very bad taste. Madame Julianne has a fine, full, fresh voice and sings beautifully, tho' she wants a little toning down, as they say. A little want of sentiment, a very good actress. Tamberlik sings beautifully, tho' he can't compare. More voice, and fuller than Mario's,

but not so exquisitely soft and beautiful. Has a little of the shaky style. Beautiful, tho'. Saw a criticism on Bosio's début. They underrate her decidedly. Formes splendid. The best basso I ever heard and executes very well indeed and acts finely. He made a fine devil. Julienne as before, tho' she is rather too ornamental. Tamberlik very fine. Stigello very good 2nd class tenor. Saw the Queen and Prince Albert.

The Northampton clergyman, who was still under thirty, and who was convinced after a long talk with the clear-headed Boston boy that his own itinerary for the next two months had been badly planned, now left for Paris, agreeing to meet Higginson in Antwerp.

We had a conversation yesterday [the boy wrote on June 15] in which he said that he thought we had both better understand that, if either wished to part, if he found company that was more to his taste, or I did, or we found we wished to go different ways, we both were at liberty to do as we please without offense. He said that we could not tell how well we should suit each other without trying, but that he might find some ministers out here whose company he might like better than mine, for, as he said, our religious opinions differ, though I don't think I have any in particular except that I don't believe all that he does, and I don't believe he ever heard me say a word about it except I said something about Mr. Peabody,<sup>1</sup> and I went to the opera, which he thinks wrong. But he was very pleasant about it and I am glad he said it, for I much prefer being entirely at liberty.

And he added, a few days later: "I have found him a remarkably agreeable, pleasant, well-informed and liberal-minded man, notwithstanding his Orthodoxy."

The Reminiscences continue the story.

<sup>1</sup> Rev. Ephraim Peabody, the Higginsons' pastor at King's Chapel.

One morning I took the train and the boat to Ostend, arrived there after some sickness, and got ashore at about six o'clock in the afternoon. I remember we were met at the landing by various porters, and one large fellow seized my luggage on his shoulders and marched me up to the hotel. There a very civil man with a large beard bowed to me and addressed me in two tongues, and then said: "Do you want a room?" I said: "I do." Having got that room, I was afraid to go downstairs to get anything to eat, because I had no words, and, therefore, I went to bed without supper. The next day I got some breakfast, and took the railroad to Bruges, where I passed part of the day, and then to Antwerp, where I met Mr. Eliot. I passed a few days there and at various others of the Belgian cities, and presently reached Cologne, and from there went to Bonn. For some reason or other Mr. Eliot left me there, and I walked from Bonn to Coblenz, and then to Mainz. From that city I went to Frankfort, where I passed two or three days looking about, and somehow or other ran across a cultivated Englishman who was one of the tutors at Cambridge, England. We struck up an acquaintance, and I went with him to Heidelberg, and then to Freiburg, and I enjoyed being with this gentleman, who invited me to come to see him in England when I returned to that country. At Basle I waited a few days again for Mr. Eliot, and then we began a tramp through Switzerland, which had been the object of my going to Europe.

Some details from the Diary will show the boy's energy in Switzerland.

*Aug. 2, 1852. Left Lucerne at 6, to Stannstadt, and to Meyringen over the Brünig pass. . . . Walked 9 hours and rode 3 hours. Rain.*

*Aug. 3. Took a guide, Ulrich Lauemer. Left Meyringen at quarter of six over the Susten Pass. Very long and hard, but very fine, to Vaasen. Saw the Stein glacier. 28 miles over*

mountains. Two hours on horses, from Vaasen to Hospenthal. Over part of St. Gothard, in carriage 2 hours. Saw the Devil's bridge, very fine indeed. In at 9 o'clock. Rain.

In a letter from Dresden in the following March, to his classmate Ned Browne, Higginson gives some details of this climb, together with an interesting message to Alexander Agassiz, also his classmate and afterward his brother-in-law:—

I, never imagining that it would be so very cold, took nothing to cover my hands, and afterwards, when we were creeping up as best we could in the snow, using all the muscles given us, my hands became so stiff that I could hardly hold anything; just then my feet gave way, and I had nothing to stand on. I was the first of us three, with one guide in front and one behind, and if I failed (we were all bound together in a line) and thus pulled down the guide in front, we were all as good as dead, whereas if the next man failed, there were two in front to hold him; therefore I was anxious, and when my feet failed, I could hardly hold the rope in my hands on account of the cold, for the guide to pull me up. But the worst was on the face of a great rock pretty nearly perpendicular, where we were all standing on a little ledge. I became faint from cold and anxiety; I do not think I was frightened at all really, for I knew what to expect, and fear is hardly a feeling to come to one in such a position, unless he is a great coward about everything; but I do not think my nerves were as firm as my companions', for I am a mere boy, and they were both men. However we did have a glorious time, and I would gladly go again. Tell Agassiz that we were on the glacier where his father made so many experiments, the Aar glacier, and saw where his hut used to stand. There is now a German professor employed in the same way, or rather he was there in summer.

*Aug. 6.* Left the hut at 5 o'clock. Over the Strahleck; in at Grindelwald at 5 o'clock. Rain.

*Aug.* 7. Left Grindelwald at 10 o'clock for the Faulhorn. Ascent quite hard, and the path very bad. In at 3 o'clock. Views very fine, and the sunset too. Took a guide up and down.

*Aug.* 8. Saw the sunrise on the Faulhorn. Very fine. The descent to Giessbach hard. No path part of the way. Left at 7 o'clock. In at 12. Saw the falls of Giessbach, beautiful, seven falls. Fine carvings and very cheap.

*Aug.* 9. Left Giessbach at 2 o'clock for Interlaken, the lake of Brienz — beautiful. In at 4 o'clock. Heard our luggage from Meyringen was lost. The hotel at Giessbach charming, very simple. Sent No. 1 to Father. Rain.

A letter written from Geneva on August 11 to his father gives a fuller account of his adventures on the Strahleck:—

. . . We arrived at the Grimsel hospice on Wednesday night, and the next day made preparations for crossing the Strahleck pass.

It is necessary to premise with regard to this pass, that it is a very rare thing, in consideration of the number of travelers, to attempt it. Mr. Murray says, there is some danger, and a great deal of difficulty in it, and the guides say the same. We all desired to go, for it was an uncommon thing, and then the views are very fine indeed.

Therefore we engaged a second guide, for we had had one for several days, and our provisions, and started about noon on Thursday for a hut belonging to a gentleman who makes experiments yearly on the Aar glacier, which is the one Prof. Agassiz experimented on, and lectured about particularly. Our walk was principally over the Aar glacier, and its collection of rocks and gravel, which is immense, being two hundred feet high at the end, where the glacier terminates, otherwise as high as Bunker Hill Monument. It is very hard walking over these collections, for the stones are very rough and sharp and the glaciers are not much better. But we had a good time run-

ning over the little mounds of ice, and jumping the crevices which, by the way, are very frequent and wide, and if you tumble down one of them, there is little chance of coming out alive. But the guides were always ready to help us, and it is not often that they fall, or slip. . . .

We started off at five with prospect of a fair day; but after two hours' walk on the glaciers, it began to rain. Soon after we came to snow on the glaciers, which makes them much more dangerous, as the cracks are hidden. After we had been walking about an hour in the snow, which was always over our shoes, and often deeper, following the steps of the foremost guide, who tried the ice with his pole before he stepped, Mr. E. fell — from one foot's failing to be well placed — on to his knee, being just on the edge of a crack. Haldeman, who was just in front of him, sprang back, and seized him by the arm, and I ran my pole under his other arm, fixing the point on the other side of the crack, so that if he had fallen farther, I should have merely dropped the pole, and he would have clung to it. But he got out very easily; so my help was of no use. The guides always tell you to carry your pole so, by the middle, and then if you fall, it comes right across the crack, if it is long enough, and will form a support until further aid. This was all I could do, as I was behind, and could not get across the crack.

This accident rather frightened the guides, so they tied us all together, putting a band around each of us, and then tying us by these at about eight ft. apart, with one of them at each end tied also, and then, if any one of us fell, the others would hold him. I was placed next to the foremost guide, a great fellow of six ft. and very strong, and therefore felt quite comfortable. We trotted on for some hours more, the snow getting deeper, and the rain having changed to snow, and at last stopped to eat just at the foot of a tremendous precipice, which we had to ascend.

After a little rest, and good lunch, during which we were

quite cold, for we were on the snow, and tho' we had india rubber on, we were very wet, and except a very thin under jacket, and one outside my vest, of knit woolen, such as the peasants wear, I was dressed entirely in linen, we started again with our ropes longer than before, and in a few minutes came to very steep ground. Just as we began it, I fell into a sort of a crevice just below a rock on which the guide was, and as I had lost all footing, he pulled me up, as I held on with my hands. The others came after in somewhat the same way. Then we had a ladder to climb at as steep angle as any I ever tried. After that more snow, and then we came to a great rock not far from perpendicular; but there is a little ledge on which we stood, until the guide scrambled across it the length of his rope, and then he pulled us up again one by one. My companions were more warmly dressed than myself, as they were in woolen, and they had also gloves, which I, not expecting such cold, had not brought; and as we had been obliged to climb up on our hands and feet and knees, as we could, my hands were intensely cold, and numb, giving me a great deal of pain, and therefore I began to be faint just in the worst possible place. However I had a pull at the brandy-flask, which set me right, and then we started again. After a long pull, during which we had to take great care not to spoil the steps of the guide, as the others had to follow in them, we at last reached the top, having spent an hour about it. It is four hundred feet high, and is almost perpendicular, for what Mr. E. said is perfectly true, that is, his hat-brim often touched the snow, when he was upright. It is wonderful what these guides can do. The fellow in front of me, besides carrying a pretty good weight, helped us all by pulling, and also either made steps in the snow, or clearing that away, cut them with his hatchet in the ice.

He and the other guide told us, when we were once up, that the new snow, which had fallen very lately, it was evident, had made the ascent three times as hard as usual.

We were now ten thousand feet above the sea, and some of the most remarkable and glorious views I ever saw were before us. The snow would cease for a little while, and the mist roll up a little: then it was that we saw the monstrous mountains we were near, the Finsteraarhorn, the Schreckhorn, the Wetterhorn, and many others towering up, and the Jungfrau, on which very few people have been, and after the ascent of which Prof. Agassiz went to bed for three days; or at least so it is said.

A striking instance of the boy's power of concentration and of his maturity of judgment is given in this letter from the Grimsel Hospice on August 5 — in the very midst of his exciting Alpine experiences: —

MY DEAR FATHER, —

I have something to say to you on a subject which was not discussed, or much considered, before I left home: what I am to do, after it is too late to travel in the north, and where I am to stay? . . . I have been making enquiries about the German Universities on all sides, and of every one I have met, who knows about them, and one of my present companions has been for the last six months at Heidelberg. I have asked Mrs. Follen and her son about it, and Mr. Dana, who has been four years at Heidelberg more or less, and taking out his absences and vacations, two and a half years all the time.

Charles Follen has been considerably on the Continent, and a great deal at the University in London, where he will graduate next year. He stayed in Dresden with a Professor Wigard, — pronounced Vigard, — a very accomplished gentleman, who has a family, and takes young men into his family, but does not teach them, and Charles liked him very much indeed. A young friend, I think a classmate of his, a Mr. Gibbs — he is of the Newport family, Alfred Seymour Gibbs his name is, I think, — stayed a year with this gentleman, study-

ing in the city somewhere all the time, and was also very much pleased. Charles F. advised me to go to Paris or London, if I sought the best lectures, by which all the instruction is given at German, and I think, French Universities; but as I told him, I did not wish to go and stay alone in those great cities, nor in Berlin, where there is too a University, and the best lectures in Germany; he said he thought Göttingen the next best place. But as I did not know the language, both he and his mother strongly recommended this Professor Wigard, for they told me, what in fact everyone has, that the easiest and quickest way to learn a language, is to live in a family where only that language is spoken. If I go there, the Professor can put me in the way of seeing and hearing what would be of much use to me, besides what I should hear at his table, for he sees the best society in Dresden. I do not mean the peers, etc., but really the best society.

Then too, he will tell me of the best teachers for everything that I may wish to study; and Dresden, too, is a very fine place to live in, for there are many works of art here; and indeed I believe the Dresden gallery is the finest out of Italy in the world, and there is a great deal of music, etc. Dresden is called the German Florence. Tho' there may seem to be no positive gain in all the fine arts, they certainly can do no harm, and they may be of great use; and of music, tho' a person understanding and knowing something of it is not perhaps any more educated for practical purposes than one without it, yet it is certainly best to cultivate yourself in what you have a talent for, and it is not vanity in me to say that I have some, tho' it may be in a slight degree, for music. All these things are to be considered, and taken for what they are worth.

When I was at Heidelberg, as I before said, I asked Mr. Dana's opinion about a University life, and also told him about my opportunity at Dresden, and my former circumstances, in fact just where I was, and all about it. Tho' he thinks very highly of the University there, and of all the others,

yet he told me that my best chance, by all odds, was at Dresden, for he said it was a rare chance to go into a family with whom I could associate, instead of a mere boarding-house, and it would take me some time to learn German at any rate. He said if I came to Heidelberg my best chance to learn to speak was to go into one of the fighting corps, who do nothing but practise, fight, and drink beer, and of them I should only learn enough to talk about their occupations. The students, he says, are divided into three classes, the reading men, who associate very little, the fighting men, with whom of course I do not wish to mix, and the idle men, who are the worst of the lot, and of course would make very poor associates. Then, too, I am sure I am rather young for a University, for the American and English students that come to them are almost always graduates of some University at home, and the German students have to pass a severe examination to graduate at the Gymnasia, which are equivalent to our Universities, before they can enter their Universities. Of course the lectures are prepared for them, and tho' I might very likely profit by some of them, yet I should be much more fit to do so when I had graduated at Cambridge. For instance, Mr. Dana, who has practised as a lawyer in Boston, has been here, studying law, and Mr. Child, and Lane, and Mr. Gould, the son of Benjamin Gould, and who is, you know, a great mathematician, came here after Cambridge; the two former are now Professors, and were called home for that purpose from here.

I have endeavored as fairly as possible to represent the comparative advantages of a University and Dresden, and tho' it is apparent that I incline to Dresden, it is quite natural with the advice I have had, and all of which I have not mentioned; but everybody thinks I had better go to Dresden. Moreover, it is very natural that I, so young, and unaccustomed to be in the world much, should prefer a family, which would be a sort of home to me, certainly more so than a boarding-house near a University. . . .

The next question, or rather the first one, is, whether it is worth while for me to stay in Europe this winter. In the first place, it seems to me that my best plan is to do as Stephen [Perkins] has decided to do himself, that is, join this year's class at the beginning of the Sophomore year. If I came home this fall, it would be too late, I am afraid, to join my own class.

Moreover, tho' my eyes are improving, they will not be strong enough, I think, to do the work necessary at Cambridge to satisfy myself, for I am not going there again until I can do what there is to be done, properly. I have had quite enough of half learning my lessons.

I think it is certain, if I can study but little this winter, say only four or five hours without injuring myself, — for I have done *that* too often to try it again, — that I can learn more here than at home; and even if I can study more, I cannot of course tell what effect a month or two of traveling, as I now am, may produce.

I shall profit more here than there, for I can get a language, the finest — or certainly, next to the English, the finest — there is, pretty well established in my head, besides what else I may pick up: and at home, tho' I may study a language, it cannot be to so great advantage as here, and there is hardly anything would be of more benefit to me, particularly as I should study French in Soph., and German in the Junior year. I think that perhaps I should like to learn French better than German, as it is more common and easier, but it is not nearly so fine a language.

To go and live in Paris would be the best way of mastering French, but I probably should not get into as fine a situation, or as advantageous a one, as I said before. I do not wish to go there to stay for a long time at present. It is the most vicious, yet the most tempting and dangerous place on earth, and I prefer not to be exposed, when too young, to it. This may seem as if I had got into bad habits, but such is not in the least the case, only I do not think anybody is too strong

in good principles, nor that it is good, especially for young persons, to try themselves in order to get seasoned. I am sure we have had examples enough of that doctrine near us, without trying it.

I have precisely the same objection to London and Berlin. There is another thing I could do at home, that is, look over the Freshman studies; but it seems to me that it is hardly worth while, for they may be learned in a much shorter time than they are at Cambridge, for it is the recitations there that take up eyes and time. I should have time enough for those, when I come home. As far as my own wishes go, if I should get up to-morrow with strong eyes, I would start for America immediately. Charming as traveling is, particularly here in Switzerland, it is not so much, nor half so much so, as *home is*. If I thought that I could gain as much by coming home this winter, as by staying here, I would not hesitate a minute by it, and I am not sure that I can make up my mind to stay, even if you say yes. But if you will merely leave it to me, to decide according to the circumstances and the state of my eyes, I will endeavor to use my judgment, unbiased by my feelings, or anything else. I do not wish you to think a moment of what I feel, for that is not of real importance, but merely of the case as it stands.

One thing more. As regards the cost of the matter, C. F. told me it would be about three quarters as much as at Cambridge, and about the same as at a German University, which, Mr. Dana also told me, is about three quarters of an American University's expenses. Charles F. must have lived pretty cheaply at Cambridge, and as he has tried Professor Wigard's, he knows about that also. . . .

This letter, we may be sure, caused some excitement in Bedford Place. No answer could be expected for nearly two months, and Henry and his clerical companion marched on by Interlaken and Thun to Berne, thence to Freiburg (in

Switzerland) and Vevey. Here the boy saw M. Thiers: a "short bright-looking little man, with a queer voice." At Geneva he discovered "a good deal of female beauty" — to say nothing of fine sunsets on Mont Blanc. He made the pilgrimage to Ferney and saw Voltaire's château, and the church "Deo erexit Voltaire." But he visited Calvin's old church likewise, and museums and libraries and the prison of Chillon. He tramped from Martigny over the Tête Noire to Châmounix, and thought "the 24 miles equal to 30 on a road." Many walkers in Switzerland will quite agree with him. For a week or more Higginson and the Reverend Mr. Eliot and the young Englishman Haldeman — who was "not very pleasant but was bright" — had fine climbing over the high passes on the Italian border, and down into Italy.

*Sept.* 3. Over the Gemmi to Kandersteg. A very steep, hard walk. Very wonderful. Parted with Haldeman on top of the Gemmi — a "cold farewell." . . .

MILAN, *Sept.* 9. Went to the Opera. Dirty and poor lights, but good orchestra and singing and pretty dancing.

Thence by Como, Bellagio, and Bormio, Higginson tramped into the Tyrol alone, for Mr. Eliot was called away for a time. A letter from Bormio, September 16, gives some vivid detail.

. . . Clothes wear out very fast here, and my shoes have to be constantly repaired. I have just been obliged to give up an old pair of pantaloons after mending and darning them till I was tired. My socks too are almost gone, altho' this morning I have darned four holes in them; but their substance has departed forever, and is resting on the Swiss mountains, and I could find no suitable ones at all in Milan. . . .

Mr. E. has a sincere wish to economize, and does so to a certain extent; but everything with him depends on his health, for if he feels badly, he loses his spirits, and then does not

enjoy walking, and cannot bear so much as if he were happy. . . .

Besides this, it is very hard sometimes for me to keep pleasant when I do not feel so, or often he is low-spirited from illness or something else, and does not feel like talking, and I sometimes am troubled with my eyes or want of success in curing them. But it would not do at all to let my light go out, for try as hard as he can, it is impossible for him to be cheerful, and we should never get along with no light.

Many times, too, there are little things to be done, for the good of both, which fall upon me, being younger; and I found occasionally in Switzerland that my physical strength was rather a bore, for it often happened that I carried more or did things, because I was stronger, tho' both of my companions were under thirty, and if they had thought, they would have known that in all probability their strength was more lasting than mine; for after all, I am but a boy. However, I am none the worse for it all, and I would not change with either of them. I have liked Mr. E. as a companion very much, for he is an excellent man of good principles, open, just, and generous, and with a great deal of taste, and generally well informed. If I were coming again, I would get a younger companion, one whom I could sympathize more with, and whom I should value as a friend all my life. . . .

You ask about the languages. In Switzerland our third companion managed for us part of the way, as he spoke German very well, and nearly half the time we were in German Switzerland; and the rest of the way Mr. E., who picked up a little French in Paris, did the talking; before that in Germany I learned a few words, and when I could not speak, I laughed, to keep the people in good humour, and managed as best I could. I paid, when I had to do so; held on to my own, and got something to eat. . . .

This mountain scenery is very fine, but I do wish to see something more beautiful and soft and less grand, something

that will make one smile and feel happy and contented to live among it, rather than what is glorious, but still pleases, tho' in a different and to me less agreeable way. The one strikes the right string within me, the other does not. . . .

I think the want of softness and gentleness in the scenery is the chief defect in Switzerland. . . .

At Munich, as at Milan, his diary contains increasingly careful notes upon painting and sculpture; but it is clearly music that charms him beyond the other arts. All this is in his mind as he writes to his father from Munich, on September 29, about plans for the winter.

. . . You may take the fine arts and society for what they are worth, and tho' neither a knowledge of music, painting or anything of the kind will probably be of any practical use to me, yet everyone will admit that they are worth something. Before I had seen paintings, fine ones I mean, sculpture, etc., I could not tell whether I really cared for them or not; but since I have seen them, I have found that I really have a love of them, tho' there is nothing like music to me. Now if I should stay in Dresden, and have sufficient eyes, I should like very much to study music. . . .

In the first place, I think it will be my best plan to join the present Freshman class at the beginning of their Sophomore year, and if I were to come home now, I do not think it would be possible for me (in fact I am almost sure it would not) to join the class this year, and certainly the first of it. I do not see that there is anything better for me to do than to stay here, and learn what I can by my ears, and a very moderate use of my eyes, if they are well enough.

I can stay till late in the spring, and return about the first of June. That would be soon enough to just be ready for the College course again after a little preparation. But if you do not think this best, why just tell me so, and I shall be much

better pleased to return than stay; for much as I enjoy everything here, and I am in the middle of it now here in Munich, I should be delighted to see home and home-faces once more. Then too the disappointment of not improving faster, and the constant remembrance, as I see one thing after another, and find I am ignorant of the history connected with it, and of thousands of other things, that I cannot remedy now, and I don't know when I can, the constant remembrance that I am cut off from all reading, all literary pursuits, is very, very galling. Then this idea ever recurs and appears to me: "You need not trouble yourself, for you are ignorant, and there is little chance of your remedying the trouble, at least for a long time." But never mind. . . .

A letter to his brother George, written on the following day, takes up again this problem of self-education.

. . . I went to the opera last night for the first time, as there had been none since my arrival here. It was "Martha," by Flotow, a comic opera, and the music is beautiful; there is very little noise, in fact none, but in two or three choruses, reminding one of Bellini's music, tho' in a comic opera there is not any play for the same exquisite and pathetic sweetness that Bellini infuses thro' his works. I do not know that Flotow has the power of that, or whether he has composed, or can do so, a serious opera, that is, one where death appears, or where there is any approach to it. But at any rate "Martha" is very beautiful. There is one thing I was surprised at, that is, the "Last Rose of Summer" is a reigning air, and is sung in allusion to a bunch of flowers, mostly roses, I thought. I do not think Flotow would have taken that air from someone else, and introduced it so constantly, yet I had thought it was originally English or Irish. It is a most beautiful thing, and I liked it more than ever last night, sung as it was beautifully, and repeated again and again. . . .

You know, my dear fellow, that your stock of knowledge is not too great, and I advise you sincerely to do your best to make it as long as possible, for the more you know, the more you are respected, and the more power you have both to help yourself and others. You understand, I know, and will not feel offended. Therefore do all you can now, for the time may come, when you will have little or no time for such things.

If you are in a store, or take up a profession or anything else, very likely you will be entirely occupied, and there will be no opportunity for anything else. Remember that you are nineteen years old, and that at that age a person is expected to know a good deal, and it is far, far better to be beyond what is looked for than behind.

So make up your deficiencies as soon as you can. You, very likely, will come abroad by and by, and before you do, it is much better to know the history of Europe, of each country and city, to have some knowledge of the important men, generals, kings, emperors, artists, poets, statesmen, etc., whose portraits and statues you will constantly see, and whose deeds are represented in various ways. I have felt the want of this knowledge very much, and you had better prepare yourself. . . .

The Diary continues to give notes on operas:—

MUNICH, Oct. 5. Went to hear "Nabucodonosor" by Verdi. Less noisy than Verdi's usually are, and some very beautiful. Finely performed, particularly the King, by Kindermann.

Oct. 8. Went to hear the opera of "Figaro's Wedding." Beautiful music, tho' very slightly like "Don Giovanni." Recitative in words without music. Kindermann (Figaro) very, very good.

Sunday, Oct. 10. Heard some fine music at St. Michael's.

Oct. 13. Yesterday I went to the opera. "Jessonda," by

Spoehr. Quiet music and pleasant, but wanting life and decision, character; somewhat like Meyerbeer's, but not nearly so much talent. Kindermann is a genius.

*Sunday, Oct. 17.* Went to hear "Norma," with Signorina Falconi as Norma! A very beautiful opera and well performed. More noisy than Bellini's music generally; not so fine as "Puritani," but still very beautiful. Signorina Falconi has a very fine, powerful voice, but shakes it too much. A very bad habit and a common modern one! She is *very* ugly, but a very fine singer, and some of the airs in "Norma" very beautiful.

*Oct. 19.* Heard "Nebuchadnezzar" again in the evening. Liked it better than before, but perceived Verdi's faults more. He tries the voice too much, is too noisy, is very fine in choruses, but is not a very pleasing composer.

*Oct. 21.* Met a young English architect at the restaurant. Went to the opera with him, and heard Beethoven's "Fidelio." Beautiful, exquisite opera, so full of feeling, so quiet, so soft, so expressive: and Fidelio's part is exquisite. Having only heard it once, I cannot tell how it would compare with others, but it is certainly next "Don Giovanni" and "Puritani." The music is mostly from stringed instruments, and hardly any drum. Recitative is mostly spoken. Signorina Falconi sang her part very well, as did they all. Kindermann as usual, and a tenor, Hartinger, whom I heard in "Jessonda" and "Norma," has a fine voice and sings *very* well *indeed*. A most beautiful opera, so calm, and yet so full of feeling. I must hear it again.

*Sunday, Oct. 24.* Went to the English service; do *not* like it. Heard "Don Giovanni." Same as usual, tho' better. A very good Leporello and fine Don G. Fine Donna Anna, with a glorious voice.

*Oct. 28.* Draw 10 pounds. See more of the Glyptothek, pay and pack. Hear a little farcical opera, "The Voice of Nature," by Lortzing. Some pretty music tho' nothing more.

On the next day he left Munich, alone, for Augsburg, Nuremberg, and Leipzig. Here he had the good fortune to hear the famous Gewandhaus orchestra on a gala day.

*Nov. 4.* Saw Mr. C. C. Perkins and his brother Mr. Doane. Went to a very fine concert, Mendelssohn's death-day, I believe, and heard a symphony of Mozart, Fantasia for piano, chorus and orchestra of Beethoven, and Mendelssohn's "Athalie," a tragedy of Racine; everything *very fine* and the music very, very beautiful. "Athalie" exquisite thing, the finest concert I think I ever heard. Mr. P. told me these concerts were the finest to be heard in Germany. Very full of first-class people, ranged in the shape of a horse-shoe.

Two days later he arrived in Dresden, which was to be his home for the winter. In the fragmentary Reminiscences, dictated in 1918, sixty-six years afterward, Henry Higginson thus pictures his surroundings:—

I then went to Dresden, and looked up Professor Wigard, with whom Charles Follen had lived and to whom Charles Follen had given me a letter. This professor, with his wife and two little daughters, lived in a good house just outside the wall of Dresden. With him were four or five students boarding, and I proposed to board there too. He gave me an excellent room, of course without any fireplace, and I lived with them, studied German, went to the theatre and the opera, which was very good indeed, studied my lessons hard, saw considerable of society, and enjoyed myself. There were various small societies of the Germans where they would have little concerts or little plays, and chiefly dances, and to those I went and tried to dance. There were also some balls of a higher class of people belonging to the Court circles, although not Court balls, and to those I also — a stranger — could go; but it was clear enough that I was not welcome, for I knew nobody and

nobody knew me, and I was a green, uncombed, unlicked cub. Saxony — a Protestant land — had a Catholic king and a church where there was splendid music, to which I also used to go when it was not too cold.

Dresden was a very pretty city lying on both sides of the Elbe, across which a fine bridge was built. The opera house, and especially the picture gallery, were of the finest kind, and the opera was at that time celebrated. There were also excellent symphony concerts in the gardens, and there were concerts of a lower grade in the various coffee-houses. I used constantly to go to them, drinking a little coffee or eating ice-cream and hearing the music. Everything was very cheap indeed — clothes, entertainments, and also my board, a good room, such fare as we had, all cost thirty thalers a month, a thaler being seventy-five cents.

Richard Wagner had been conductor at the Dresden Opera until the Revolution of 1848, when he had run away; and as this was in 1853, his work and his influence remained; and it was there that I first heard the Wagner opera "Tannhäuser."

The professor with whom I lived had been a government officer, had been in the Frankfort Parliament and had shown himself to be a "Red," so he lost his appointment. Therefore, at about forty, he studied medicine and became an excellent physician. His wife, a simple housekeeper, a good woman, with one maid, looked after the food for her husband, the two little girls, and us six young fellows. The food was of the simplest. Bread soup was very common — bread, a trifle of lard and hot water; and it was very thin. Then we had all kinds of sausages, and in the evening at supper we used to do very well. My digestion was that of a horse, and I did not care what I ate, but I did not like to see the lady of the house serve the food, cut the bread and the sausages, trim the oil-lamps, wipe her fingers on her hair, and then cut the bread again. Still, a boy's stomach is strong. Of course there were no habits of washing, and when I asked for a bathtub I had to

buy one. I sat on the floor and was measured, and they brought me a nice wooden tub, which was put under my bed. Presently I found that it had disappeared, and learned that the family washing was done in the bathtub during the day and I was allowed to have it at night.

The students all lived in one room, and I remember that they changed their shirts once a week. They would begin with them white, and they would be dark brown before the week was over; but they were pretty good fellows. It was there that I first saw the disposition of the younger German men. I lived there five months, and for some reason or other I was not on speaking terms with one or another of the students. One man would take up a huff and would not speak to me or look at me for a week or ten days, and then another, and then another. I never knew what the matter was, and very soon gave up caring.

It was a peaceful, happy life. Mr. Lothrop Motley was there studying to write his "History of the Netherlands." I had a letter to him, and he and his wife were very kind to me, and invited me to dine there once a week, which I did.<sup>1</sup> His three daughters were young, the eldest being twelve years old, and they were very nice children.

I remember that at one of the little societies where we used to go pretty often and where I learned to dance, a little festival came, and a little ballet was arranged. A certain costume was necessary, and more particularly a certain kind of shoe. I was selected to lead the ballet, and had a nice partner. But if I was considered the best dancer, think what the others must have been.

The boy's letters home during that fall and winter were uniformly cheerful, though his eyes were still far from strong. He had youth, health, and humor; and he was justifying his

<sup>1</sup> "He is a very honest, ingenuous, intelligent lad," wrote Motley, on December 23, 1852.

father's full confidence in his ability to decide all the larger matters for himself. His letter of credit with the Baring Brothers of London for £400 was ample for his needs.

"I have entire confidence in your prudence and good judgment with regard to outgoes," wrote his father, who did not wish to know the details of Henry's expenditures, and was constantly urging him not to economize too much. "Do not pinch yourself. See all the sights, go to all the entertainments you can, and enjoy yourself in every rational mode. I have not been in so good a position to incur the expenditure for many years. . . . Get all the amusement you can, and if you have time for it, take lessons on the piano or for the voice. I go for cultivating the *tastes* which are commendable — so far as one can consistently with other calls — to any extent. You are disposed to be very prudent about your expenditures, which is an excellent habit, but I wish you to feel free to give yourself all the advantages which are at command, knowing as I do that you will use the privilege wisely."

Upon a few points, however, George Higginson was most particular in his admonitions. One of them concerned Henry's clothes. "Do let me know that you have a wardrobe becoming a well-provided and well-dressed Gentleman." Henry's reply to this was succinct: "To dress better than those around me except in the matter of clean underclothes would be bad taste."

Another matter for worriment was Henry's epistolary style. Though the father wrote more than once "how much your blessed mother would have enjoyed your letters," he nevertheless found his boy sadly lacking "in the mechanical execution" of the "beautiful accomplishment" of letter-writing. "Avoid *repetitions* studiously, by having at command a *stock* of synonyms for ready use." "Aim at simplicity and conciseness." "Let me recommend you to omit some of the 'ands' in arranging sentences, and to adopt the *old* spelling, using two *l*'s in 'traveller,' for instance, instead of *one*, as Webster lays down." The humorous fact was that his father's own hand-

writing was almost undecipherable, and that he broke the rules of Blair's Rhetoric, on occasion, as recklessly as his boy. Sometimes he seems almost aware of it! "I fear that my letters will try your eyes somewhat." "I often think that I repeat too much in way of admonitions and in expression of earnest wishes for behavior. The fact is, I am *rather fussy.*" And so are many of the most lovable persons in the world.

What the son preferred in a letter, on the other hand, was absolute informality, directness, simple "talking." "I do not want to hear anything remarkable," he wrote to his aunt, Mrs. S. T. Morse, in August, 1852, "but write just as you would if I saw you only yesterday and you were talking to me. Write what you are thinking about, what is going on inside rather than out. . . . Draw a picture in words, of the family, of everybody, of Father, of the children, of all of you."

In letter after letter, in reply to his father's continued suggestions, Henry defends his own theory of writing. "When I've thought over what I wish to say, it is not so well said as when I write and think at the same time, though the mechanical part of the premeditated portion is better." He finds brother George's letters "a little too much like themes . . . rather too much style, if I may say so. You all write what you see and say and what is done; no more. It would really do the elder boys and Mary good to write out what is going on inside. It would be far more interesting than mere narrative to me, and they would learn to know themselves and to think more." "I must choose my subject and humor for each correspondent." Four years later, he was to write from Paris: "A letter should be merely a little talk on paper, and that is quite all."

Here are extracts from two or three of his own letters to his father from Dresden, telling about himself.

Nov. 15, 1852.

. . . For amusements I want no money but for music, and that is not very expensive here: even that I would not indulge

in to the extent I have and shall, did I not try to learn something by it, did I not consider it as a study in a measure: indeed I have already learned something and would know more. My desire has only increased very much since I've been abroad, and I shall certainly study it with a master, if I have the eyes, and if not, at least I can play somewhat, and amuse my otherwise idle hours. I've already hired a very good piano for \$2.50, cheap enough when compared with the prices at home, and not dear at any rate. I shall practise by myself till I can understand German better, and then try a master.

Tell me, or rather let George tell me, how he gets on, and what his difficulties are; also tell him to ask Aunt Hattie what she thinks of his trying what I always did and do now: playing airs that I remembered from the concerts and operas, and also much from other people's playing, and setting a bass for myself. Also playing the same thing in different keys, etc., etc. I learned much I think by that, and tho' it is much better to play by note, yet, as I could not always use my eyes, I learned this. . . .

Nov. 26, 1852.

. . . One thing I 've here that few students have — a very large tub, no modern tin hat or anything of the kind, but a huge wooden tub for which I was measured as I lay on the floor, and in it I jump every morning, and it is the best thing I have except my piano. Oh! I am very well off indeed. . . .

Now I think of it, let me say to you that it is useless to expect me to come home with *strong* eyes or certainly *well* ones; for tho' they are, I think, much better, yet they are *by no means* well, and indeed I do not suppose they will be before the limit first set by Dr. B., my twenty-first year. Do not feel discouraged, because it has been so for three years now, and I suppose I can stand it for three more, tho' I hope it will not be so bad. I hope and expect when I return to join the present Fresh. class at the beginning of my Soph. year, but I

would prefer to have it not mentioned, for I do not like to have reports of what I shall do circulated when it is so uncertain. . . .

*Dec. 14, 1852.*

. . . As to my own eyes, I can't say that they are better than when I came to Dresden, tho' I did not expect them to be so, and *think* they are no worse or certainly very little; I do not use them much, and think they may last as they are till I begin to move again, when they may improve more. At least they must try their luck in college next year. I am finely as usual, and very much pleased with my life; more so than I have been with anything since I left school three years, almost, since: pleased I am, because satisfied with my present occupation. I know I learn something every day; that I need not and do not depend on those around me for occupation and amusement, but that I can always help myself; that my mind has something to do, to occupy itself with, and that is a most important thing for everyone. It is an occupation in itself to watch people and talk with them, to learn what they think, feel, and do, to study their national character, and compare it with our own and with what I know of theirs. . . .

I think this six months here may be a most useful period of my life in after years, and it is a thing which I probably should never have done, if not sent abroad in this way when young. That is the *only* point, the *youth*, that annoys me, and that not much. I of course am with men and women, grown-up persons, and it has been so ever since I was in Europe. Those young Englishmen that I met in Munich were two of them twenty-two and the third a little younger than I: but the two elder ones were thoro'ly men, and one of them had made his own living for some years, and was then doing the same. I found them infinitely more to my taste and agreeable to me than the younger one, tho' he was perfectly pleasant and good-humored. It has been so constantly all thro', and I've passed for twenty years old everywhere and do here. Indeed some-

one, I forget who, thought I was twenty-four. Still I do not feel so old, and I would give a great deal to have a good game of football or something of the sort. . . .

The diary of 1852 and 1853 gives some further details that illuminate the boy's character and tastes, in his strange environment.

*Nov. 12.* Mr. Webster dead. Much feeling about it in America.

*Nov. 16.* Heard "Masaniello." Beautiful opera and the overture remarkable.

*Nov. 18.* My birthday. [He was now 18.] Saw the gallery for the first time. The Madonna (Raphael) by all odds the finest thing I ever saw. . . . But I must see more before saying anything.

*Nov. 20.* Went to a concert on the Terrace and heard a symphony of Beethoven's and more very good music. Some of Wagner's which I liked very well indeed.

*Nov. 26.* Went to Mr. Motley's.

*Sunday, Nov. 28.* Heard "Tannhäuser" of Wagner's. A very beautiful opera indeed, and showing a vast deal of talent, I think. Very difficult music, and must be heard several times. It is *equal* to Meyerbeer's. No ballet, and a deal of singing.

*Dec. 3.* Went to a fine concert. Had "The Rose of Pilgerfahrt" from Schumann and "Œdipus" from Mendelssohn. The first beautiful and very well sung, particularly the soprano and tenor parts. "Œdipus," entirely for men's voices, is very fine, but too deep to decide at one hearing.

*Dec. 4.* Heard the "Prophet." It is fine but not so good as "Roberto," I think, tho' I must hear it twice more to decide. Too much spectacle and the skating is too much prolonged. Still it is very fine music indeed, tho' not well performed that night. The tenor is no actor and Michalesi is too old for her part.

*Dec.* 6. Began my music lessons. Went to a rather common ball, but had a good time. We almost got into a fight. Went to bed at 5 A.M.

*Dec.* 11. Heard "Iphigenia in Aulis" from Glück. A very fine opera indeed, with small amount of show and most beautiful music. Better performed than they usually play here. It must, like the other great operas, be heard more than once.

*Dec.* 14. Made my first visit to a German family and had a good time.

*Dec.* 15. Heard a Pole, "Mr. Dawson," play "Shylock," and it was very fine indeed. Everything about the company was good.

*Dec.* 24. The presents were given this evening, and a very pretty sight it was. The little tree lighted, etc. Some relations of Mad. W. were there and we had a very pleasant supper indeed. Afterwards two of us went to the Catholic church to hear mass from eleven to one o'clock. The music was very fine indeed. The church very full.

*Dec.* 25. Christmas Day. Went to Mr. Motley's to dinner, and after to see a quantity of children receive their presents in the "Odeon." Very pretty.

*Dec.* 30. Went to Berlin with Sedgwick<sup>1</sup> and arrived after six hours' ride. No scenery. Met a number of Americans, Crocker, Joy, Easter, Hungerford, Heard, Aiken, Williams, Underwood, Whitney, Brown, Levett Hunt, Ellery, Dr. Abbott, etc. Very pleasant, all of them. . . . Went to hear "Euryanthe" of Weber, with Wagner, Köster, another prima donna, a tenor Formes, and some others. Beautiful music and learned, requiring to be heard often. Wagner's voice is splendid, but she sings too loud sometimes. I like her very much. Köster has a beautiful voice tho' not very strong, but she sings beautifully and would have pleased me more a year since than Wagner. She is very graceful and I think pretty, and Wagner is just the contrary. The tenor is very fine tho'

<sup>1</sup> William Dwight Sedgwick, who was killed at Antietam.

not equal to Tichatschek, yet he sings better. The other singers good; a baritone or bass Krause very good. The whole opera well got up. The orchestra very fine, but no better than the Dresden, tho' a little stronger; it seemed to me there was a little too much brass, but I don't know. The ballet is said to be very good here, but there was very little dancing in "Euryanthe." The theatre is the handsomest, most brilliant I've seen, and the King's box is very handsome. . . . After the theatre we went to a number of cafés, etc., and had a good deal of fun.

*Dec. 31.* Went to Mr. Fay's, who is very agreeable, sang, etc., and then to a masked public ball. We danced somewhat, but all the women were engaged; it was at "Kroll's" and the room is very fine indeed. Saw the New Year in, for the first time in my life.

*Jan. 3, 1853.* In the evening in opera house we saw "Hamlet" in German, and I did not understand a great deal. A man Dessoir played Hamlet, and very well too.

*Jan. 5.* Left Berlin and got home in the evening.

*Jan. 14.* Went to my first Casino ball and did pretty well; but it was stiff, and I knew no German ladies. The English are not easy to dance with.

*Jan. 25.* Heard "Jessonda" from the Meyer. Very beautiful indeed, improving vastly on acquaintance. Meyer sang beautifully, I think, and the critics are all wrong about her: she sings in time, truly, and clearly. The others, particularly Mittewurzer, sang very well.

*Jan. 31.* "Josua" oratorio from Handel. Very fine, tho' rather beyond me.

*Feb. 3.* Saw "Die Stumme von Portici." Such an overture as that has been rarely composed, I believe. A beautiful opera, and very much better than before. Tichatschek sings very well indeed in it, and everything is so charming.

*Feb. 9.* Great concert in the theatre: played a symphony from Haydn, performed for the first time here, very beautiful

indeed, and the melodies, two movements, were repeated. The orchestra played exquisitely. Some choruses, a song from Meyer, and a symphony from Beethoven more beautiful to me than Haydn's. The finest concert I've heard, I think. The orchestra very full and Lapinski leading and Beissinger directing. Afterwards we had another lesson for our costume-dance.

*Feb. 10.* Had our costume-dance in Lese-Verein, and it succeeded capitally, I believe. My partner was the best dancer, and she certainly looked and danced very prettily. The short dresses, boots, etc., were very pretty, but our dress was ugly enough and very hot. My moustache was highly successful and admired by my partner and others much. Afterwards we had a very nice dance, and in the two dances the ladies engaged, I had much to do. We danced until about 5 o'clock, and got to bed at 6 o'clock A.M.

*Feb. 19.* Heard "The Montagues and Capulets." A good opera, but the Italian music is very meagre after the German, nothing but melody and very little accompaniment. It does not appear to me nearly so good as "Puritani." The Meyer sang very well and with a good deal of taste, I think, but she did not please me so much as she has before, in "Jessonda" and perhaps in other parts. The Krebs sang finely, better than I could have believed she could, and she looked and played very well indeed. The other parts are not much, tho' the tenor is a tolerable one and fairly sung. It is not Bellini's best, and far behind the German music for me.

*Feb. 23.* Went to a little party at Mrs. Motley's. Very pleasant.

*March 5.* The police were at the Professor's to-day, and searched the house, also throughout the city; nothing found.

*March 7.* Went to the last Lapinski concert, beautiful indeed. Very sorry they are over.

*March 9.* Heard a nice comedy with Devrient, who plays capitally; very good and amusing. Understood pretty well.

*March 11.* Drew 10 pounds. Passport was late and so I

could not go with the others to Prague, but the pass. came in P.M. and I went at 10 o'clock. There was a strong endeavor to put me thro' a course of sprouts reaching nearly to the skin, but it failed. Reached Prague at 5, and turned in for three hours. Very cold.

He passed a delightful week in the galleries, churches, and museums of Vienna, a city which was later to be his home for several years. "An Italian opera troupe here, and therefore I shall not go to the opera." But he heard Weber's "Freischütz" in Prague on the way back to Dresden, and liked it. This Boston youth of eighteen perceived that "the ladies of Vienna and Prague have much beauty, far more than in Dresden." Returning to Dresden on March 19, he was just in time for "the rehearsal of the great concert in the theatre. The concert is Mozart's 'Requiem' and the ninth Symphony of Beethoven with a chorus and singing. The finest concert I think I ever heard. The 'Requiem' wonderful, but hard to understand and take in. The symphony most beautiful, and the singing part also."

*Sunday, March 20.* Heard again the great concert, and it was much better (to me) but I had a bad place. The theatre very full. These two concerts have been most wonderful, and one wishes to hear them 12 times or more.

*March 21.* The police asked to see me about my passport, and asked a few questions of no importance.

*March 22.* I received my notice from the police to quit, and wrote immediately to Mr. Barnard, American Minister in Berlin, and to Mr. Fay.

*March 23.* My affair is going on, Mr. Forbes, the English Minister, having interfered with the Saxon, one Beust.

*March 25.* Wrote to Beust and sent these two letters with mine to him. Rec'd leave early in the day to remain another day.

*March 26.* Heard thro' Mr. Forbes that the police have orders not to act for the present.

This affair of the "police," which mystified young Higginson at the time, and amused him throughout his life, is best explained through a letter which Mr. Motley wrote to Mr. Henry Cabot of Boston, the grandfather of Honorable Henry Cabot Lodge, who discovered the letter in 1911. Through his kindness it is here reprinted.

DRESDEN, 26 March, '53.

MY DEAR MR. CABOT:—

Young Higginson, who brought me a letter of introduction from yourself in November last, is writing by this mail to his father. I have promised to write to you also, to give an account of a slight episode in the history of our own time in which he is connected.

He went to Vienna about a fortnight ago in company with some young friends (Americans) from Berlin. They all went off sooner than he had expected, in order to reach Rome for the Holy Week. Being left alone, he returned to Dresden. On applying for his *carte de séjour* next day, he was informed by the police that he must leave the city within three days. He came to me for advice. I told him that he had better write at once to Mr. Barnard, the American Minister in Berlin, and that I would at the same time address a line to Mr. Fay, secretary of Legation there, who was an old acquaintance of mine.

As Higginson was entirely innocent of any offense either by word or deed against the Government of Saxony or of any other Government in Europe, the affront of expelling him from Dresden seemed not only unjust but even ridiculous. I stated as much to Mr. Fay, and I gave him at the same time the assurance that the young gentleman thus shabbily treated was a member of one of the most respectable families in Massachusetts, that he had left our college on account of his eye-

sight, which had been slightly impaired by study, and that he was in Dresden for the sake of acquiring the German language.

In the meantime, as the term was so short, and as I considered it highly important that this police order should be suspended in order that he might not be obliged to leave the town at the dictation of the police, I consulted privately and unofficially the English Minister here, Mr. Forbes, with whom I happened to be intimately acquainted. As he is always as ready to do a kindness to an American, as to one of his own countrymen, I thought it best to apply to him, that the matter might be stopped in time if possible.

This I thought would be in better taste and more agreeable to Mr. Higginson's father and friends than for him to submit to an expulsion and then to become the topic of several long-winded official despatches and newspaper paragraphs. Judging of their feelings by my own, I thought they would prefer that he should establish the high respectability of his position at home and of his individual character and so be allowed to remain, rather than to make a claim for an empty apology afterwards, which might or might not be granted.

Mr. Forbes, within ten minutes after my conversation with him, mentioned the matter to the chief minister here, who is at the head both of foreign affairs and of the home department. The minister stated that he had not yet been informed as to the facts of the case, but he had thought that Mr. Higginson was an Englishman who had been recently expelled from Vienna. Mr. Forbes in the evening called at my house, and after being informed by me that his last statement was entirely erroneous, he addressed a note to the minister, correcting the mistake. The reply was a hurried line, stating that Higginson was at liberty to stay a day longer, and that in the meantime the affair would be examined. Next day came letters from Mr. Barnard and Mr. Fay, at Berlin, vouching at length and in the strongest terms for the high respectability of Mr. Higginson and expressing an undoubting conviction

that the police authorities of Dresden, in ordering his expulsion, were acting under error or upon some grossly false information. These papers were enclosed by Higginson, according to my advice, to the Minister of State (Amory's old acquaintance, von Beust, by the way), accompanied by a brief note expressing his entire innocence of any offense against the re-pose of the Kingdom of Saxony or of the Austrian Empire.

This morning I received a note from Mr. Forbes informing me that he had just received one from Mr. de Beust. In this communication the Home Minister stated that "orders had been given to the police not to act for the present." Mr. Forbes added his conviction "that nothing more would be done to annoy Mr. Higginson."

I have just written an account of the whole matter to Mr. Fay at Berlin, and unless Mr. Barnard should think proper, which I do not expect or desire (for my own part), to take any further official notice of the transaction, the subject will, I suppose, be thus terminated. . . .

The real *dessous des cartes* of the whole business is simply this. Higginson was advised before ever coming to Dresden, by some friends, to take up his residence, for the sake of learning the language, in the family of a certain professor of stenography, who is disliked by the government here for his political principles. I know nothing of him, good, bad, or indifferent. Higginson was already established in his house before he presented himself to me last November. I never had heard the professor's name in my life, and as H. had never asked my advice on the subject, of course it never occurred to me to give him any. Neither did it ever occur to me that he would render himself liable to any such annoyance by having selected such quarters.

I suppose the matter is now settled. At the same time, were I in Higginson's place I should not feel inclined (having fully vindicated my character) to stay much longer in a place where my least action would be inevitably observed. The professor

with whom he lives is under the minute surveillance of the police and so doubtless are all his inmates. I know no advantage to be derived by Higginson from a long stay in Dresden, which would compensate for such an uncomfortable position. . . . If governments are afraid of such a perfectly quiet and well-behaved young man as your kinsman, they must be of necessity in a perpetual state of anxiety and trepidation. There could hardly have been a more harmless "looker on in Vienna" than H. was. . . .

Very sincerely and affectionately yours,

J. L. M.

Major Higginson's comment upon this letter, when Senator Lodge brought it to his attention, is too breezily characteristic to be omitted:—

*July 25, 1911.*

DEAR CABOT:—

Thank you for your note and for that interesting paper from Mr. Motley. I never have forgotten the event, for it made a deep impression and, indeed, excited much wrath. Mr. Motley was very kind indeed, and the same is true of Mr. Forbes, the English Minister; von Beust, who was much hated at that time, and who afterwards was in the Prussian service, treated me civilly enough, although it was in a lordly style which those men use. I could have punched his head with pleasure. . . .

I had taken a good deal of pains not to annoy anybody, had never had a pistol, never talked of a pistol, never threatened anybody, had done nothing irregular, did not drink or smoke, went to my lessons regularly and to the theatre or the opera two or three times a week, and to all the concerts I could find. (I was eighteen years old.) The little pistol incident, which had been cooked up no doubt in order to get me out of the town, and then the other part of confronting me with the witness, made me very wrathy. Mr. Motley knew of it at the time, I think, but it was not worth remembering. Then I

stayed a few days, and quit, going to Berlin, where I stayed some months. There, following the advice of Mr. Fay, as I think, I made for myself a very regular life, going to the lectures at a certain hour, and going to the theatre, and never had any more trouble. . . .

The boy took his time before leaving for Berlin, lingering in the Gallery over Holbeins, Ruysdaels, and hearing "die Ney" in "Norma"—a new singer whose voice was admirable, though she was "ugly and badly made. Only the singing part of her is good."

*Sunday, April 3.* Heard the "Huguenots" for the first time: it pleased me better than "The Prophet," tho' still Meyerbeer makes too much noise and show. The long scene between the lovers is very good, and many other things too. I must hear it more to decide. Tichatschek is here and sang most beautifully, and also "the Ney." Mittewurzer very badly. "Tichat" is perfectly wonderful, more so than "the Ney."

*April 6.* Heard "Oberon" from Weber. The overture very beautiful, and I liked the whole opera very much, tho' it wants more hearing. Too much "spectacle," and yet, with the story, almost unavoidable. Beautiful scenery and all very pleasing indeed. Tichatschek and others sang very well, and "the Ney" better and with more expression than I have heard her before. Much pleased.

*April 10.* Heard "Der Freischütz" again with "the Ney" and Tichatschek. I liked it very well indeed in some parts, and it was well performed, but I should like to hear it again with a little more passion and more soul.

*April 13.* Heard "The Prophet" again. Better than before, but still not much, after the old composers.

*April 15.* Went on the terrace and heard a "zither," a very old instrument, like a guitar a little, tho' not so long.

*April 16.* Heard "Martha" in the evening, with Ellinger again. A very fair little opera with some good things in it, but the best air stolen as aforesaid. "The Meyer" sang very well, pleasing as usual.

*April 22.* Went to see Mr. Forbes, the English Min., very pleasant man. Packed up and went off. Arrived in Berlin in the evening. Had 160 German lbs. luggage. Went to Dr. Abbott.

Berlin in the spring of 1853 was not an inspiring place for the Boston boy. He took lodgings in the Jäger-Strasse, attended Professor Magnus's lectures in physics, took lessons in German and music, and went steadily to the theatres and opera house; but the diary gives one the impression that he was bored. He was troubled too, by the question of his future. Back in March, at Dresden, just before the difficulty with the police, he had written a twenty-four page letter to his father, discussing the various professions, and asking his father's counsel upon the advisability of remaining two or three years at a German university. Portions of this letter follow.

Law seems to me a profession calculated to draw forth the disagreeable, disputatious, quarrelsome features, which are more or less in every man's character. . . . There is one thing about a doctor's profession that places it in my eyes high above a lawyer's, that is, it is one in which there is always room for advance and improvement of the profession itself, not of one's self in it. . . . For a clergyman's calling there is but one thing to be said, as it appears to me: if one feels inside himself, in his heart, that he should be a clergyman, let him be one, and on no other condition. As regards a merchant, you yourself are most strongly set against any of us following the profession, and I for myself am too—if anything better offers. In the first place money is *the* thing with a merchant. . . . How often have both you and Grandfather

Lee said to us all, "Don't be merchants; anything else is better!" . . . There is but one conclusion to be drawn of your opinion of wealth, which I know you have always had — that it is very dangerous. Moreover, what good *personally* does a man derive from money further than that always derived from *giving*? . . . Of an engineer or surveyor's profession I think very well . . . but it takes one rather too much away from the civilized world, excludes one too much from any social enjoyment. . . . If I was sure I had a talent for music, as I am *certain* that it is the one thing I like best in the world, I would study it thoroughly and make it my profession. But I am not, and therefore shall merely do so far as lies in my power. . . .

There are several professions here which we hardly have as yet *as professions*, and among them some very necessary to us. One, that of chemist, — I do not mean merely apothecary, for the sale of drugs, — is very little practised as a profession in America, and yet how necessary, in our factories very much, in farming also very useful. . . . It is as yet a very empty profession, and all the others I have named are very full. . . . I cannot say that I should like to follow it as a profession, but I should like some knowledge . . . and then I can judge more properly. . . . I have striven to understand myself, my own nature, character, feelings, all as hard, nay harder than for anything, and if I have not succeeded, it is not my fault; but I think I have. Since I have left home, it appears to me I have changed, I have grown older, I have found my way, and can see more clearly thro' the mist that envelopes one's youth; I feel more as if I had an object in life, and consequently happier and better satisfied with myself. I do not know whether you have marked anything of the kind in my letters, but it is so. . . .

Now what I wish to ask is to stay here longer, and go to a university and gain all I can. It may seem strange for me, with weak eyes, to think of such a thing, but I have been waiting some time to tell you what I can now, that my eyes are

decidedly better. . . . I can study six hours a day, and to-day have been writing and practising with notes seven or more without any suffering to speak of. . . . I think it would be well to take chemistry, physics to a certain degree, perhaps history, and to continue with music. . . . Of the bad habits of the German students, I think with myself there is not much danger. I mean the fighting, beer-drinking, and smoking. For the first I have merely to say that it is too childish and silly to be tolerated; for beer, tho' I have tried to like it, as it is wholesome and good in moderation, I have not the slightest *taste*, and have a very strong *distaste*; for all liquors and wines I seem to have been born with a dislike, for which I am truly thankful; and as to smoking, altho' it would be a great convenience to smoke, as I am every day annoyed by it, I have a real hate for tobacco in every shape, and I think I would not learn for the world. It may be that at last I should come to it, but I do not believe it after a year's seasoning, such as I have had. . . .

You must decide what you can afford. . . . There is one thing, as I before said, that makes me very, very sorry to leave Europe: the loss of music. I do think it makes and has made a real and a great change in me, since I first began with it; and if I continue to hear and to cultivate it, so will the change go on and the advantage increase. I do not believe there is anything more refining than music, no greater or stronger preservative against evil, and at least for me it has done much. I am almost thankful that I have had weak eyes; indeed I am quite so, for it has given me the time and opportunity to find out how much music is to me, and it has opened pleasures to me that otherwise would very possibly have never been discovered. I am afraid to trust to my feelings within, to my own ideas, or I should study music for a profession. I know not how one finds that he has a talent for any one thing without trying: but everyone has a particular faculty for something, everyone has a decided turn and talent for a particular branch,

and it is his duty to try to find this out, and to turn to it. If one may trust what he hears within himself, in his own heart, and be sure that it is right, I should say that my talent was for music, and that, if I studied it properly and persevered, I could bring out something worth having, worthy of a life thus spent, worthy of a man, worthy of my mother and of you. . . . I would not be a music teacher for anything; far better to be a merchant. . . . I beg of you not to show this letter to *anyone*. . . . If you can give me any answer by the middle of May, I should be glad.

Here was a good deal, surely, to set George Higginson thinking. "I pray Heaven to give me power to aid you by my experiences and counsels," he replied; but the counsels varied with each letter. In general he was inclined, at first, to leave the decision to Henry, though he suggested a return to Cambridge for two years, to be followed by attendance at some university in Germany. He wants his son to take more pains with style, to "attend church once at least on Sundays," to overcome "a certain dash or tinge of conceit," which he discovers in Henry's letters, to take boxing and dancing lessons, to avoid the "anti-Christian and unholy" practice of dueling, to frequent the society of "cultured ladies," and to beware of the infidelity and immorality of a university city, lest the father should feel "the self-reproach in after years of beholding you astray and with unstable opinions on all sacred things, traceable perhaps to foreign influences."

The boy's answers to these various admonitions are full of patient good sense. As for the boxing lessons, "Bully Hig" is becomingly modest:—

You suggest the propriety of dancing and boxing lessons, and also drawing, to me. I have danced enough for the present, and as to boxing, with the exception of a few Englishmen in Dresden, I was very likely, indeed probably, the best boxer

there. The Germans have no *idea* of boxing, not one. Drawing is a thing I should like very much to do, but I do not think I have any faculty for it, and moreover it is not well to undertake so many things at once.

On the subject of immorality and infidelity the boy writes with perfect frankness.

There is unquestionably less morality than at home in some ways. . . . Female virtue is not so highly prized as at home, but this arises, I think, chiefly from the poverty of people generally, and from the great restrictions placed by the Government on marriages. Drinking is very much less frequent than at home, at least hard drinking. . . . I know full well all these dangers, or at least as well as one who has not tried them can; I have been here perfectly free for a year, and have seen something of them all in others. I have refused several times to go to Paris until I was older and more seasoned; and even now, tho' I could and should like much to go with Uncle H. this summer, I will not do so. Believe me, I will not make the false step in these matters. . . . About this matter of infidelity I have thought lately considerably. The great difficulty with the Germans is indifference. . . . If you knew how hateful this indifference among the Germans about matters of religion is to me, more hateful even than open atheism, for that shows decision and thought, at least, and is moreover more pitiable than hateable! . . . You say in your last letter that you "recommend" me to return. . . . If you *mean* so, do say, "you must return," or express the command. . . . Do be quick but sure.

But after having given his "free assent" to Henry's plans for remaining in Germany, the father announces, late in June, that he has changed his mind. He has had "anxious doubts" ever since he gave assent, and now he wishes his son to come

home, in order to enjoy the social advantages of Cambridge, and to "cherish these blessed family bonds." Eliot Cabot has told him that the surface drainage of Berlin is offensive in summer-time, and likely to result in an epidemic of cholera. James is entering Harvard, and will need an older brother's care. And "*I need you*"; at last the affectionate, worrying father tells the whole truth.

May, June, and July dragged on, while these letters went back and forth. "Read pretty nearly all day," the diary records. "Read and read, and heard 'Fidelio.'" "Read again much." Dr. and Mrs. William Dexter of Boston were kind to him, as were the Fays and the Barnards. One lucky Sunday he met "a young American, Mr. Gildersleeve," who was later to become the famous Johns Hopkins professor, and the two boys went to Kroll's Theatre and heard "Der Freischütz." A few days later he heard "the Wagner" again:—

"Very fine, voice very fine and powerful, I think manages it well, tho' I wish to hear more to be certain, and sings with a great deal of feeling and expression. Her higher notes are wonderful and she has fine low notes also. Her appearance pleased me very well." He thought Halévy's "Die Jüden" "too noisy and showy"; but adds, characteristically, "I must hear it again to decide about it." It took only one visit to the Dom-Kirche, however, to persuade him that it was "not much of a church." He enjoyed "the Wagner" and Formes again in "Lucrezia Borgia" and "Die Jüden," and liked particularly "the Köster" in Glück's "Iphigenia in Tauris," although this composition seemed to him "very hard indeed to understand."

A letter from the Island of Rügen, on July 27, shows that the boy was wearying of the long uncertainty, and was ready enough to welcome any decision that his father might make.

. . . Perhaps you do not know just where this island is, for it is a very small one. It is just off the southern shore

of the Baltic, north of Stettin, and about 10 hours sail from that place. We, that is Dr. Dexter, Mrs. D., and myself, heard of this place as a pleasant one, and after studying it out, determined to come here, and spend as long a time as was agreeable, in walking, bathing, fishing, reading, etc.; and accordingly we left Berlin the 20th of this month for the trip. It was sooner than we had intended to start, for our lectures were not finished and there were other reasons for staying; but we were all getting run down, we could not study, and so thought it better to depart from that city of pestilent odors. . . .

I knew, when you wrote me about leaving Berlin for the summer, that it was not healthy there, but had hardly begun to feel it in the air. However, it will not be so another summer, for an English company have taken a contract to supply the city with water and also to drain it properly, building the drains — all of which are now on the surface except the very largest — under ground and conducting fresh water thro' them to keep them clean. That is German enterprise, to let the English do such a thing for the public use and good!

We had a ride of a few hours to Stettin, where we stayed a day looking round to see the *greatest Prussian port* where the *Prussian navy* lies. Such miserable-looking affairs as their vessels, I never saw, so different from our trim, pretty-looking ones; and as to the navy, I have heard that they have two vessels. We saw one very good-sized, nice steamship, but I do not believe the Prussians ever *built* such a thing. . . .

My last was pretty strong against coming home, and yet I almost think I shall be glad to do as you wish. Nothing but the future advantages could induce me to remain, and tho' it may seem very changeable in me to have and to express so many and so different opinions on one subject, yet the difficulty of the position must excuse it. One day I feel as if I could and would stay and profit very much by the advantages within my reach, as if it would be my ruin to return now. Another, I am longing to get back, and feel as if no earthly

honor or pleasure, no hope even of doing *more* for the good of others in my lifetime than is possible if I leave the advantages of this part of the world behind me, could tempt me to stay another month so alone. However, send your decision and I will act upon it at once, one way or the other, and not whine any more. . . .

The outing at Rügen was pleasant enough. He tramped, loafed, heard a good deal of light opera, dined and danced with some agreeable German ladies, and saw the King of Prussia (the "old Kaiser" of later fame). "The King came; looked very tight; bowed to us particularly; great many officers, etc." But by August 10 the diary notes: "Nothing particular. Getting on in life." Evidently it was time to move on, and two days later he bade good-bye to Doctor and Mrs. Dexter, went back to Berlin to pack up, and started for Paris. "Return with all convenient speed," his father was writing, "in order that you may place yourself under the influences of the Cambridge worthies."

Yet the boy stayed two weeks in Paris, "saw a great deal," as the diary indicates in detail, and found the city "very interesting indeed." He dined with French officers, called upon such Perkinseys, Lees, and Peabodys as happened to be in Paris, shopped industriously to procure gifts for his family,<sup>1</sup> and then crossed to London for his last week, sailing for home on the America on Saturday, September 17, 1853. "We were fourteen days at sea precisely," says the diary. "Rough, uncomfortable weather. One pretty English girl on board. Also a very pleasant German lady, who took me for her brother-in-law. The last day was beautiful, and our harbor was so, too. Good-bye, we are there."

But long, long, will "the Cambridge worthies" sit, before they see anything of Henry Higginson.

<sup>1</sup> "If you once begin in our enormous family, where can you end; where do you wish to end?" he had written in boyish despair to his father.

## CHAPTER III

### A PERIOD OF FERMENT

A period of ferment for all of us young people.—H. L. H., *Reminiscences*.

THE next three years are best summarized in the words that appear at the head of this chapter. In one sense it is the old story of the influence of an entrancing, fatal *Wanderjahr*. The youth returns to the family hearth-stone; but he is no longer the same youth who went away, and the kinsfolk whom he finds waiting for him are strangely the same and yet not the same as they were before. Turgenev has painted the situation once for all in "Fathers and Children," yet each generation must continue to discover it anew in its own experience. The inevitable period of readjustment need not be tragic, as in Turgenev's story. Sometimes it is smiling or tearful comedy, and often it may be diagnosed as "growing pains."

To understand that Bedford Place world to which Henry Higginson returned in the autumn of 1853, we must be allowed to glance back at the family correspondence during his absence. These letters will reveal the characteristic interests of the Higginson household, and they afford some pleasant glimpses of the long-vanished Boston Town of 1852 and 1853.

An affectionate note from Henry's aunt, Harriet Lee Morse, — his mother's sister, — written from Brookline in June, 1852, gives a charming picture of the England she had wished the boy to know.

BROOKLINE, June 28, 1852.

. . . You will be in your glory, dear Henry, when you return to England and really travel through some of those exquisite quiet old villages, so loved by dear Miss Mitford, and by your

Mother through Miss Mitford's books; just think of the lanes hedged by primroses and hawthorn, and a fine ruin in the distance overgrown with ivy; and then again coming to a little serene-looking village, and stopping at mine host's inn and sleeping in sweet-scented lavender sheets. Dear Hen, I could *almost* envy you when I think of your continental enjoyments; but when in fancy I place you in England next spring just as Isaak Walton's brooks are beginning to ripple over their sunny beds, and all nature is bursting into leaf and flower, then, I say, I really *long* to be with you. . . . Do not forget to

- leave plenty of time for bonny Old England, there are so many thousand scenes of interest there to you now, and still more when you have regained your eyes in future years. Explore Westmoreland, where is Lake Windermere, where Wordsworth lived and wrote; and near by is Fox How (don't fail to go there), the retreat and rest of Dr. Arnold, one of the best and most useful men this sun ever shone upon. Then Oxford and Cambridge teeming with interest to you, and every other scholar. . . .

But of all this he had seen nothing!

Here is the Harvard Class Day of 1852, described by faithful elder brother George, aged 19, who, like Henry and their intimate friends, William Amory, Stephen Perkins, and "Jim" Savage, — and their older acquaintance, Francis Parkman, — is now having serious trouble with his eyes:—

BROOKLINE, June 18, 1852.

MY DEAR HENRY:—

. . . Last Friday was Class-day. The fellows seemed to enjoy the day very much. It is said to be the largest class which has ever graduated from Harvard, being over ninety in number when they parted. They have not lost any of their number by death, and few have left for other reasons. Thayer delivered a fine oration, which gratified his class very much, and William-

son wrote a good poem, which he was unfortunately prevented from delivering by the death of his Mother. Choate of Salem read it in his place. The Ode was written by Horatio Alger, and sung tolerably well by the class. They made one or two changes, which I think was a mistake; they ran but once around the tree, which vexed the other classes very much, particularly the Juniors, who thought they were afraid of being knocked over by the lower classes. They also made another mistake, in cutting down the wreath of flowers instead of jumping for it, both of which changes rather took away from the excitement of the scene.

It is George, likewise, who in the autumn of that year describes with due solemnity the passing of Daniel Webster.

" . . . You will see by the papers that the greatest man by far that our country has been able to boast of, since the time of Washington, has finished his earthly course. Daniel Webster died at Marshfield on the morning of the 24th. He is a great loss to the country and everyone seems to feel it. The city is dressed in mourning — coaches, shops and streets. It will be a long time, I am afraid, before we shall have another man who will do so much good to the Union as he has; however, he has done his work on earth faithfully, and it is not possible that such a person should be always with us, for every man must die some time, and he was past the usual age of man, being more than seventy."

In November the Music Hall was dedicated, and we shall let Frank describe the great event.

*Nov. 23, 1852.*

DEAR HENRY: —

I wish you could have been here at the opening of the New Music Hall on Saturday evening. Friday evening they had it open to subscribers. Father had the use of Uncle Harry's tickets, and Mary and I went with him to see it. It is a splendid Hall. There are two galleries. It is lighted in a new manner

from above just below the cornice by a succession of gas-lights about half a foot apart running all round the room; for the purpose of lighting there is a passage-way round between the lights and the outer wall for one man only to pass. The seats are very comfortable and have round backs. The Organ is out of sight and there is an open piece of work in front. It was opened by Madame Alboni and there was an Oratorio Sunday evening, in which Madame Sontag sang. The dimensions are 130 long, 78 wide, 65 feet high, and it will seat about 3000 people. Aunt Hatty had a little son born on Thursday morning which was your birthday, and they think of naming him Henry.<sup>1</sup> I saw it on Sunday and it looked very queer. . . .

F. L. HIGGINSON.

But it is brother Jim, just turned sixteen in June, 1852, and already a music-lover and philosopher, who provides the most varied and delightful comments upon what is going on during Henry's absence. James is greatly worried, at first, over Henry's traveling with a clergyman. "Don't let him [Mr. Eliot] prevent you from going either to concerts and operas." By August it was evident that his fears on this head were groundless. "I am glad you and Mr. Eliot are on as good terms as you describe, though I had no doubt of his being agreeable, etc. His religious opinions will not interfere with yours, if indeed you have any." Then he turns cheerfully to an account of the Harvard-Yale boat-race of 1852, on Lake Winnepe-saukee. Yale men who read this page will note that it is a future President of the Harvard Club of New York who is writing.

"There has just been a regatta at Lake Winnipisiogee between the Harvard fellows and the Yale ditto. There were four boats present, the Oneida of Cambridge, the Shawmut and Undine both of Yale, and the Atalanta belonging to New

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Henry Lee Morse.

York, but manned by students from Yale. The last one pulls four oars, the other three are eight-oared boats. In a preliminary trial, which was had on the morning of the day appointed for the race, the course being about a mile and a half, the boats came in in the order I have named them above, the Oneida distancing the Shawmut by about eighty feet. At the regular trial in the afternoon, in which the boats were to pull up the bay two miles, they started together and kept so for some time; but afterwards the Oneida shot ahead and maintained her place, coming in *again first*, and was very heartily cheered by the spectators on shore. The prize was a handsome pair of black walnut oars, ornamented with silver tops, etc. The second prize, which was taken by the Shawmut, was a silver-mounted boat-hook. I hear that Charley Paine belonged to the Oneida. The last ten strokes of her crew are said to have been very powerful ones. You can imagine them swearing away, while they almost lift their boat out of the water at each stroke. The Yale fellows, I hear, had been practising for a long time, in expectation of the contest, before they sent their invitation to the Harvard boys. They therefore had the advantage in that, but the latter were *heavier* men, and so gained the victory."

Here is James Higginson's comment on the Presidential nominations of 1852:—

"The Whig Presidential nomination has been made, and Gen. Scott is the unhappy man fixed upon. The Godlike Daniel was again disappointed in his hopes and expectations, though his friends are trying to console his wounded pride as much as possible. Mr. Fillmore may send him to England, since the Hon. Abbott [Lawrence] has asked to be recalled next November. Gen. Pierce is the other candidate [Democratic] and will probably be elected, for Scott at present seems to stand but very little chance. You see in these glorious days, nothing but military heroes will suit the people. Henry Clay has just breathed his last, amidst the groans and lamentations of an affectionate people, as the papers say."

In the same letter, July 11, 1852, he gives his elder brother this grave warning: "Don't become too much of an Englishman, Henry; they are very well in their way, but in common with other people, have their faults."

But he does not neglect local matter like "Bloody Monday" at Harvard.

"I shall go over with S——n Perkins, if he will go, alone if he will not, to see the football match on the memorable Monday, the 6th Sept.<sup>1</sup> Don't you wish you could be there to tumble over some of the Sophomores of last year. Your class will of course beat. The Freshmen who were examined in July as a class do not look very promising, I hear rather sheepish than otherwise."

It is in this letter that he refers to the building which was soon to be the home of the new firm of Lee and Higginson: "The new building in Exchange St. is progressing rapidly and promises when finished to be quite handsome and bear the marks of the Lee taste."

In November James reports the result of the Presidential contest.

"The Presidential Election has taken place, and *Pierce* of New Hampshire, the Democratic Candidate, has been chosen by a very large majority, carrying every State but two. . . . Poor old Scott! The only thing he can now claim is to being—since Wellington is dead—the greatest soldier in the world. If he had never tried to be anything but a soldier, his reputation would have been better."

Then he passes to the musical and theatrical affairs of Boston, in which the Higginson boys were so keenly interested.

"Madame Sontag has made her début on the Boston stage and been received very warmly; her voice is said to possess an exceeding depth of pathos and sweetness. Madame Anna

<sup>1</sup> Charles Lowell, who was a Junior, wrote to Henry a full description of this contest. "Steph. Perkins was on the ground *fighting lassily*, and I observed *tum fratrem* on the fence." — E. W. Emerson, *Life and Letters of Charles Russell Lowell* (Boston, 1907), p. 75.

Thillon is also here, at the Howard. The New National Theatre has been opened, but Leonard, — the former auctioneer, — who is now manager, does not seem to have a very good stock company, and the theatre is sinking to its original position. It is a pity we should not have some good permanent company here. At present, there seems to be no chance for an opera this winter. Bosio, Bettini, Truffi and husband are in Europe, Badiali is singing with Sontag. Perhaps we may be able to have one before the season is through. The Musical Fund and Germanians have both opened their subscription lists in this city, and we shall no doubt have a continued stream of concerts."

So the boy's merry letters go gossiping along, about Mr. Abbott Lawrence's return from the English mission, about Uncle Harry Lee's presence at the Duke of Wellington's funeral, and the *coup d'état* of Louis Napoleon. In February, 1853, he goes into rhapsodies over Madame Alboni's "glorious voice."

"Nobody looked or thought of her figure, only her beautiful face, beaming with the sunniest and most unaffected smiles that ever were seen. . . . I never heard such tremendous applause in my life. . . . The Germanians brought out a new symphony of Beethoven last Saturday evening, the first time it has ever been performed in this country. *Dwight*, I believe, says it was very fine, beautiful, etc., but no doubt most of the audience thought it terribly dull."

He quizzes Henry over his friendship with the Motleys.

"We are glad to hear that our respected brother is on an intimate footing with Mr. and Mrs. Lothrop Motley. Can't you aid him in his history, that history which for so many years has been preparing? . . . It will no doubt be so valuable that its chances for a rapid sale are about equal to those of Jeremy Taylor's 'Tracts and Sermons.' "

But the "Dutch Republic," it is now quite unnecessary to say, outsold Jeremy Taylor!

James Higginson's last letter to his brother, in July, 1853, combats with fierce affection a plan which was already, it seems, in Henry's mind, and which he was later to carry out.

"*Young German*, for that is the title by which I shall hereafter designate you if you still determine to make Germany your fatherland, why were you so foolish as to write a (private) letter of such enormous length to your father on the subject of staying on the Continent for a term of three or more years, in spite of the voice of reason, which tells you, or ought to tell you, that such a course would be ruinous to you hereafter, as you would find that you had no contemporaries. . . . I vow perhaps you had better spend all your life there, marry a German girl, and never come over the broad ocean to revisit your friends and former home. I'll cut you if you do, never come to see you as long as you live. . . . This will be my last letter to you, old fellow, unless you come home."

A few lines from Henry's little sister "Molly" must complete the family correspondence of this eventful year. Mary contents herself at first with describing Uncle Harry Lee's new house in Brookline, and asking such delightfully inconsecutive questions as: "Have you seen the Queen or any of her children? Have you heard how sick Sarah Cabot is?"

By October Mary, who is now fourteen, is permitted to attend a Harvard "Exhibition." "You asked me to tell anything that may come into my head, so I am doing it now. I went to Cambridge the other day with George. It was Exhibition day, and Charley Lowell, James Pierce, young Mr. Davis, Sylvester Waterhouse, Charles Bancroft, that handsome pleasant young man cousin of Wilder Dwight, Wilder Dwight, and I don't remember the others, spoke. I enjoyed it *very* much indeed."

By February she writes: "I shall have my ears bored pretty soon and I want you to bring me a pretty pair of ear-rings. Father is willing. Ella Lowell told me that in Rome they wore a great deal of jewelry and that it was very pretty and very

cheap. So if you go there you might look out for some. But it is no sort of matter, for Paris or any other place will do just as well."

Her father, always anxious about the epistolary style of his children, adds this characteristic postscript: "M. has made various attempts with this affair — yet it is full of errors. I send it, simply to show you what she *desires* to offer by way of remembrance of you. When it has performed its office, put it into your fireplace, for I would not have it kept."

But Henry kept it till his death.

And here he was, at last, back in Bedford Place, with his presents for all of the family, and his stories of the Strahleck Pass and the Dresden police and Berlin and Paris; with his first beard, too, for he was almost nineteen, and this is the Pendennis and George Warrington era.<sup>1</sup> He was loyal and affectionate, as always, but, like Bazaroff in "Fathers and Children," he did not quite fit in with the Bedford Place scheme of things. He had intellectual ambitions, as we have seen, but he had fallen out of step with the Cambridge men. His Harvard classmates were now Juniors. He could no longer hope to make up his studies and rejoin them; nor could he be allowed to enter, like Stephen Perkins, the Sophomore class of 1856. Unwilling to start over again as a Freshman, he asked his father's permission to pursue studies with Mr. Samuel Eliot, — a cousin of Charles W. Eliot, — who was then taking private pupils in his house in Louisburg Square. "He took great pains with me, and I worked very hard under his care," said the pupil. These lessons lasted about a year and a half.

"He continued," notes Mrs. Higginson, "friendly relations

<sup>1</sup> Thackeray had been lecturing in Boston in January, 1853. Here is the account of it written by George Higginson, Sr., to Henry. "We have all been very much entertained and delighted by a course of lectures which Thackeray of Pendennis memory — now on a visit to our shores — has just given us, portraying the private lives and characters of some of the noted writers and evils of Queen Anne's times and later — beginning with Dean Swift and ending with Sterne and Goldsmith. His audiences were large and intelligent, and doubtless very pleasing to himself. I never listened to a course with more pleasure."

with his classmates, passing much of his time at Mrs. Lowell's, the mother of Charles Lowell, and joining all the sociable life of the young people in Cambridge, which centred in Mrs. Lowell's house. There were private theatricals, sometimes in German, there was a delightful German class, and there were readings which finished with a delightful social gathering in the evening. He belonged to a singing society, 'The Orpheus,' and also to a private singing club in Boston, and often went to James Savage's room in Holworthy, where there was much informal singing and music."

Nothing could be more agreeable than all this, but it was obvious that time was passing, and that Henry would soon be twenty-one. Mr. George Higginson now appears upon the scene. Henry had had eighteen months at home, and there was apparently very little to show for it. Surely the calling of "a merchant"—whatever George Higginson may have said against it—was much better than no profession at all. And here the Reminiscences take up the story:—

In March, 1855, my father secured for me a place in the office of Messrs. Samuel and Edward Austin, India merchants on India Wharf, and there I served nineteen months as sole clerk and bookkeeper. I enjoyed the life with them, did the work to their satisfaction, attended to the correspondence and the cash, kept the bank accounts, wrote copies of the foreign letters, examined the invoices, entered all the goods in the Custom House, made out the bills and collected them. Of course all the financial operations they themselves made, in securing letters of credit, buying remittances, chartering ships, etc. We had a ship a month, the goods coming from Calcutta, Manila, Java, and Australia. At the end of my time of service with them I received their recommendation as having satisfied them, and a recommendation to go to India under the employ of a friend who had a large business there; but he did not want me, and I did not want to go.

During all that time I had seen a great deal of certain classmates, and a great deal of my friends, Stephen Perkins, Charles Lowell, James Savage, and many others. We had walked and talked together, discussed all sorts of problems, been deeply interested in many things—and they had plenty of new ideas. Charles Lowell and Stephen Perkins were among the most brilliant men I ever have known—very thoughtful, and fond of taking up everything and discussing it from the bottom—not content with the affairs of this world, being what one now would call real reformers or radicals, and measuring everything by their own footrule. The slavery questions were more and more important at that time, and the question of Kansas came up. Men were sent to Kansas and Nebraska to keep the States out of Slavery. Frank Sanborn, who was in our class, had gone out and reported as to how things looked there, and I wanted to go, but he said it was useless to go unless I proposed to live there.

I had had two ventures in indigo, which were allowed while I was in the office, and the result of the first was spent in equipping a good-looking Irishman with his family to go to Kansas and settle. I fitted him out with clothes and arms, and he started off, got as far as Albany, sent his family adrift, and went elsewhere.

During all this time I used to go into society a good deal, went to the parties, made many acquaintances, saw many girls, with whom I made friends and who added very much to the happiness of my life. I used to do figures all day long in examining fresh sets of invoices, and I remember saying to Mr. Edward Austin—who was very bright—one day something about future employment. He asked me what I wanted to do, and I said I did not know; that work on the wharf did not seem to me to require any mind; that I wanted something which would use my mind and would give me a chance to take hold of life more seriously. He muttered: "I guess when you have some notes to pay, you will find that your mind is busy enough"; which struck me as true.

It was a period of ferment for all of us young people. I was wild about slavery and anti-slavery, did not like the Abolitionists, could not bear the disgrace to our country of slavery, believed that we should have sooner or later a great struggle, and that we should get rid of it in some way. At that time several fugitive slaves in Boston were taken and sent back under the Fugitive Slave Act, which Mr. Webster had helped pass, being merely a strengthening of a law which had stood for many years. A slave-owner had a right to come anywhere in the North and seize a man who had been his slave and had run away, and the Federal authorities were obliged to take that man back. It happened two or three times in Boston that these cases arose, and the last one was the case of Anthony Burns. The whole matter busied our town for some days; the Court House was surrounded with chains, some of the militia companies were called out, and eventually a body of marines from the Navy Yard—a body of prize-fighters and bar-tenders—were put right around the negro Burns, and several of our militia companies marched with them in order that, if attacked, there should be no rescue. Charles Lowell and I saw the man put on board the ship and carried off, and we swore that that thing should be redressed, and it was.<sup>1</sup>

Our class graduated in 1855 and let me partake in the festivities of Class Day and Commencement, for I had many friends there. After another year of work in the office on the wharf, I wished much to go abroad. Charles Lowell had broken down and had been sent abroad, and I proposed to join him. Stephen Perkins and Powell Mason were going with me, and we sailed about the first of November. At that time I had inherited about \$13,000 from an old uncle who had just died, and I expected to live on the interest of that.

Samuel and Edward Austin, who gave Henry Higginson his first training in business, were old-fashioned shipping mer-

<sup>1</sup> Henry's words were: "Charley, it will come to us to set this right." — E. W. Emerson, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

chants at 34 India Wharf. Some of their characteristics are vividly painted in letters from Henry to his father after the death of the senior partner, in 1858.

VIENNA, Oct. 19, 1858.

Mr. Sam Austin too is gone. I'd expected to hear that pretty soon, but not immediately. I had a letter to him in hand, half written; it is the second, the first having been burned as unsatisfactory to me. Mr. Charles Sumner, who was here last week, told me that his trouble was in the kidneys, of which I've no conception or understanding. Mr. Austin was a tolerably happy man, I should say, tho' not especially desirous of living, or of dying either, perhaps. As I've often told you, they were both curious men; they liked to make money, and did not like to lose it; yet it caused them no particular pleasure in the one case, and certainly no real pain, or even vexation, in the other. You could never have told, when Mr. Edward looked at the balance at the foot of an account sales of a cargo and of the a/c current with Mr. Bowditch, you could never have told whether it was to his debit or credit; and the same of his brother. He used to express annoyance at remissness in forwarding a/cs and remittances; and they both were vexed by disobedience to express orders to their agents or at cheating; but farther than that their tempers were astonishingly even, As masters they were perfectly easy to satisfy; regularity, punctuality, thoughtfulness, accuracy, obedience (to the spirit not to the letter), use of one's common sense was all that was required. In return one was treated like a gentleman, no questions asked; interest in one's affairs and consideration for one's feelings and wishes, a desire to help and not to keep down the clerk, was always shown. And what always struck me agreeably, they were both quite willing to be proved wrong; many a time I have shown Mr. Edward this or that little error in statistics or other things, where he'd forgotten, and where it was my business to know; the correction always was accepted

with perfect courtesy, and, last but not least, an *entire* trust in my truth and honor. . . .

And he wrote again on March 30, 1859:—

Mr. E. A. is a knowing, cool merchant; I used to think him sometimes better than his brother. I never saw such entire self-possession; no fall, no rise, no loss, no gain, no misfortune, no difficulty, no man, nothing could disturb his imperturbability. He was always ready to yield to Mr. Bowditch, always ready to correct a mistake, very energetic, a perfect man to work for because one always knew what was expected, never angry at errors, always ready to give explanations and advice, and the latter was so good. For instance my order to India on coming here; I knew that indigo was scarce at home, and was going to be scarce in Bengal, and therefore judged it safe for an operation within limits; but should have probably done nothing without his advice on the subject, so readily and clearly given. He looked at the matter and said "Yes." Prime man. He could make a million now, if he wanted to do so.

It is pleasant to add here a letter from the junior partner, written to his former clerk during the Civil War. Mr. Edward Austin is remembered in State Street as an old gentleman of somewhat severe aspect, who "looked as if he wanted to knock you down with the stick he was carrying"; but though only a graduate of the "Campaigns of Gunny Bags and Saltpetre," his views of soldiership and his loyalty to the Union must have comforted the young Major to whom the letter is addressed.

BOSTON, April 11 [1863].

MY DEAR SIR:—

I have your very interesting note of 5th inst., for which am much obliged. I regret very much not seeing you when you were here. If I had known that you were in town, I should

have done myself the pleasure to have called upon you. It gives me much satisfaction to find that you did not leave your men to go into the 2d. merely to be advanced a grade. I cannot conceive anything more detrimental to the discipline of a Regiment than for its officers to want that *esprit de corps* which binds them to it in every other service. Every new officer has his ideas of discipline, and when often changed, the men get disheartened. You are perfectly right in your remarks as to men. First of all, the elements of all *Trades* are to be learned, *i.e.*, its tools, be they accounts or guns and muskets; but the mistake which is made in all professions is that the graduate who has learned but the names conceives that he is master of his Trade. The graduate at Cambridge thinks himself a scholar, of West Point a General, and from the counting-room, a merchant. Now, one in a million of these graduates really proves that Providence has given him brains to at once command after preliminary study; for the remainder, nothing but hard and constant work will ever bring out success. Napoleon was a genius; the Duke of Wellington a hard and patient worker, and I have never known a hard and constant worker in any profession—with average brains—that did not stand above his fellows.

To take the conceit out of a man, give him a responsible situation, and see what he will do. We have had examples enough during this war, Heaven knows. The clever men do not seem to have been found in the right place, but I have firm faith in the army — there may, and must be, mistakes, but in the long run it must be successful. Do you know that I envy the young men who have been so fortunate as to start in life with such an object as yours? All the property I have, and ten times more, if I had it, would I give for the chance to distinguish myself in such a cause. My Campaigns were Gunny Bags and Saltpetre.

The "Union Club" not only admits "Army men" but makes much of them, and you may be sure—as well as your

friends—of not only a hearty welcome but to become members whenever you desire it. I send you Everett's oration to us upon our first meeting.

Pray let me hear from you as often as you have leisure. If you meet Lieutenant (who ought to have by right been Captain) Bowditch, give him my kind regards—he is a promising young man.

Very truly yours,

ED. AUSTIN.

MAJOR H. L. HIGGINSON  
2d Mass. Cavalry.

Of political ferment, between 1853 and 1856, there was surely enough. The Burns case has been so fully described in Charles F. Adams's "Life of R. H. Dana" and in Thomas Wentworth Higginson's "Cheerful Yesterdays," that it needs no further comment here. But no one can forget the picture of the two shame-stricken Boston boys, Higginson and Lowell, among the crowd of 20,000 that followed the last fugitive slave captured in Massachusetts, as the mob swept down State Street to Long Wharf on June 2, 1854. "Charley, it will come to us to set this right." But how?

One solution of the insoluble problem was then thought to be possible through the emigration of Free Soil men to Kansas. As late as September, 1856, Charles Lowell wrote from Vevey to Henry: "Are you going to Kansas? You 'd better, I think, unless things look brighter." The zeal for a free Kansas was shared by Henry's brother James, who in 1856 was a Junior at Harvard. He had attended for a while the well-known school in Concord taught by young Frank B. Sanborn, one of Henry's classmates in Cambridge, and was still fond of spending his spare time in Concord. George Higginson's sons had now come into a small inheritance, and the following letter shows James's ideas on investing it.

CONCORD, *June 23 [1856]*.

. . . I want you, Henry, to give a hundred dollars with me to that Kansas Committee — each give that amount, I mean. Two hundred to \$800, Reeder said, was enough to support a man there for one year. It will be some comfort to think that we were doing something towards helping make Kansas a free state — and money after all is not much to give. Men are what they want. Why don't you go out there? I should feel mighty like going if I were out of college. That's a safe proviso perhaps, but really I would like to go for a year or more and do what I could—not to settle there, however. Should n't fancy that at all. But for giving that money, what do you think about it? I won't press you hard, for I know you will need your income (don't that sound grandly for a little amount like \$300 or \$400 a year) much sooner than I shall mine, either for business or other purposes, so that it might be a real sacrifice to you, if not an imprudent expenditure, while it would not make much difference to me, for I shall not need mine — except perhaps to live on, and even then what would a hundred dollars more or less be — for two or three years. I hope you will think about it and tell me. I have no doubt you feel as much interest as I do in the affair, so won't say anything more about that. I can't draw mine, you see, as you can yours, and it is rather doubtful whether Father will give me any. I threatened in a letter I wrote to him yesterday to borrow it of some friend, if he did not send it along. . . .

A later letter shows the attempt to enlist the support of Harvard undergraduates. It may safely be hazarded that President Walker did not approve of the proposed meeting!

CONCORD, *Sept. 7th, 1856.*

DEAR HENRY, —

Sanborn asked me to tell you that there is to be a Kansas meeting at Cambridge on Wednesday evening next, at which

he will be — and wants you to come out there if possible, so that he may see you and have a chance to tell you about his journey to the West, which he says he promised to do before he started. So come along there and you will enjoy it, I have no doubt. I don't know who presides. James was invited to, but declined on the plea that he never presided at political meetings of any kind. Sanborn says he thinks there will be a good deal of enthusiasm. James has promised a subscription and Jennison the same, to be made at the meeting, I suppose.

Then there are to be subscription lists passed round on Thursday among the fellows, who I hope will come out well. I am going down on Wednesday myself to see to the matter in my own class.

However, you come out there on Wednesday and we will see about all these things. The meeting will probably be at Lyceum Hall.

Yrs. truly,

J. J. HIGGINSON.

John Brown's fight at Ossawatomie against the Border Rufians had taken place one week earlier, on August 30. "There will be no more peace in this land until slavery is done for," said "old Brown," as he watched with streaming eyes the flames of burning Ossawatomie. "I will give them something else to do than to extend slave territory. I will carry the war into Africa." But the young enthusiasts of Concord and Cambridge were not ready for this — as yet.

One sentence in the Reminiscences of this period has a touch of wistfulness: "Our class graduated in 1855 and *let me partake* of the festivities of Class Day and Commencement, for I had many friends there." His little bundle of Harvard souvenirs, kept religiously for more than sixty years, contains all the programmes of the Commencement of his class, marked "*Our Class Day, 1855.*" Here is a ticket admitting "a Gentleman and Ladies to the Exercises in the Chapel and Dance in Harvard Hall"; a penciled list of Class officers; and the formidable

"Order of Exercises for Commencement," with titles of thirty-nine "Essays," "Disquisitions," "Dissertations," and "Oration," culminating in the two "parts," — bracketed as indicating that the highest honors for scholarship were divided in that year, — "An Oration, 'The Man of Purpose,'" by Robert Treat Paine of Boston, and "An Oration, 'Immature Authorship and Premature Publication,'" by Francis Channing Barlow of Cambridge. Paine was one of Henry Higginson's cousins, and "Frank" Barlow — not yet a major-general — was a warm friend. Phillips Brooks, it may be noticed, delivered a Dissertation on "Rabaut, the Protestant Preacher"; Alexander Agassiz, a Disquisition on "Goethe as a Man of Science," and F. B. Sanborn an Oration on "The Schoolmaster of the Future" — curious foreshadowings of the future of the three boys. One cannot tell what the unlucky "some-time member" — so full of sentiment, of secret ambition for self-development and for service — really felt as he listened to all this eloquence, or whether he listened to it at all. But one cannot help hoping that he recalled a certain ancient fable about a hare and a tortoise.

For Henry Higginson, as everyone knows now, was destined ultimately to "arrive." He was a type-specimen of the slowly developing Anglo-Saxon, uncertain of himself, unconscious of his deepest motives, unaware as yet of his true aim. In the autumn of 1856, when he "wished to go abroad" again, he was almost twenty-two; vigorous in body, inquisitive and tenacious of facts, with some training in mercantile affairs, yet dissatisfied with "trade" as a livelihood. His chief pleasures were in music and in the society of a few young men of his own age and social circumstances. He felt that he was a "radical," in one of the most conservative communities in the United States; but Charles Lowell and Stephen Perkins and James Savage were "radical" likewise, perceiving vaguely that the times were out of joint, and ignorant as yet of any practicable method of setting them right.

He had absorbed a great deal of the Emersonian doctrine of individualism, and was soon to keep over his desk a picture of the Concord seer. He had marked independence of judgment, and clung pertinaciously to his conclusions. Yet his family affection and tribal loyalty ran warm. He had a whimsical appreciation of the Higginson and Lee characteristics, and could be a sharp critic, not only of inherited foibles, but of petty matters like his sister's spelling, and his brothers' carelessness in school, and his father's choice of ink and writing-paper. He had, in fact, a streak of his father's fastidiousness, and it might have grown into priggishness if "Bully Hig" had been anything of a prig. But he was not. In general, he was singularly tolerant, for a young Bostonian of his day. His anger blazed against "cool cheating," and like Henry Fielding, he thought it worse than any sins of the flesh. "Nothing like an open game on this earth," he exclaims in one of his youthful letters.

In his personal habits he was then, as always, a Puritan. In deference to his father and mother, he could sit decorously in the family pew in the gallery of King's Chapel. But at heart he disliked liturgies, and preferred solitary reading of his Bible to churchgoing. If he had any deep passion, at twenty-two, it was the passion for friendship, for "the manly love of comrades," so often denied to the cold New England temperament. Henry Higginson had what Emerson and Thoreau described and yearned for, without ever quite possessing — a strong natural affection for other men. His night-long talks with "Johnny" Bancroft and Stephen Perkins and Charles Lowell taught him more than a university could teach, and he kept fresh, until he was more than eighty, this adolescent capacity for interest in new persons. He rarely lost an old friendship, and he was forever forging new ones. Both early and late in life, he was "splenetic and rash" in passing judgment upon individuals; but these hasty decisions, for the most part, had to do with persons whom he did not really know. To

his true comrades he was like a lover. "Wherever you are," said Stephen Perkins to him once, "there is a hearth and roses bloom."

When he sailed for Europe with Powell Mason and Stephen Perkins in November, 1856, his most obvious reason for going was that Charles Lowell was ill and lonely in Italy, and that he could help him with his presence and his purse. Mingled with this impulse of comradeship there were, no doubt, obscurer motives: weariness of the counting-room on India Wharf, the restlessness of youth, and the desire for self-realization; the dream, scarcely acknowledged in words, of devoting himself to the art of music; and the discovery, already made in 1852 and 1853, that Europe, siren-sweet, was forever beckoning.

## CHAPTER IV

### FOUR YEARS OF EUROPE

Long I followed happy guides,  
I could never reach their sides.

— EMERSON, *Forerunners*.

THE first entry in his diary of the journey follows.

*Wednesday, Nov. 5 [1856]. I sailed from Boston for Liverpool in the Arabia on this day at 12 M., in company with Stephen Perkins and Powell Mason. . . . Capt. Stone commander — a fine, clear, cold day — glad to be off after so many delays — was not sick. I left my will ashore with father, contg. a note for Charley to be del'd to Jim H. in case of his death and mine too, of course. Jim H. also to take charge of my papers and books, etc.*

They had a ten days' voyage. Henry beguiled the time with long talks with Stephen Perkins about their future, and read "The Heir of Redcliffe" — "rather tiresome yet interesting." Landing at Liverpool at 2 A.M., the three Boston boys ran all the way to the Victoria Hotel. On the next day, Sunday, November 16, Henry looked up his cousins, the William Channings of London, who happened to be in Liverpool, where Mr. Channing was preaching. They went up to London on Monday, and Henry celebrated his twenty-second birthday by moving into lodgings on the Strand. He visited the Turner exhibition but "did n't like many of the pictures"; also the Crystal Palace and the famous Barclay's Brewery. At the bookshops he bought Bacon's "Essays" and "Advancement of Learning," and Clough's "Bothie" — though he dis-

covered that Clough was "hardly known to the booksellers in London." He went to the opera, of course, and found Grisi's voice "wearing thin," and that the English were too boisterous in the applause of favorite passages. "They don't understand applause. It should be given delicately."

The Channings, who had now returned to London, took him to the house of Gordon Cummings, then famous as an African lion-hunter: —

Went to Gordon Cummings's in the evening, with Fanny and Frank C. Lots of skins, horns, skulls, tusks, etc., of all kinds of beasts. Charming musician with old ballads. Cummings is a very tall, large, graceful and strong man, and relates the account of his hunting — chiefly in South Africa — with a good deal of spirit — sometimes swelling into the most absurd bombast — giving us a little of his own poetry — killed 104 elephants — lions without number, shot rhinoceroses and all manner of beasts — something quite new and unique.

"Cousin William" Channing told him that the English were disappointed at Buchanan's victory over Frémont in the Presidential election: —

They are with the Republican party, with the North, and they damn the South and its principles. The idea cherished and put forth by the South that England will form an alliance with them in case of our disunion is all stuff. They'll do nothing of the kind, but they may do something quite different. They might perhaps help us in getting rid of slavery, or in any struggle we may have. However, we shall see.

At the end of November the three Boston youths left for Paris, and settled down there, as it proved, for two months. Charles Lowell had just left Florence for the South, and it

was impossible to join him at once. The friends took rooms in different *pensions*, so as to hear nothing but French. "Scrubbing away at the language" was Henry's description of his life for the next few weeks in "dirty and cloudy" Paris. But they relaxed occasionally. "Waxed our moustaches and walked in the Champs Élysées, very much noticed, Pow. in his new clothes and I in my old homespuns and cap." — "Went to Mass at the Madeleine, a huge gorgeous temple inside, too much gilded, too much *bosh*, for beauty; inappropriate inside and out for a church." He saw the Emperor and Empress at a ball in the opera house: "At 11½ the Emperor and Empress entered their box — cry of 'Vive l'Empereur' — a rush to see him — we succeeded in getting near him and were much pleased. The Empress looked thin and pale."

Of a ball in a private house he writes in his diary: —

To a ball at M. Chalamet's — got there at ten o'clk, a concert just beginning. Four rooms prettily arranged for the ball with mirrors and hangings, rooms very full. Watched the whist-players for more than an hour and then played four hours myself, won 22 sous — strange game they play, leading trumps out first, etc., etc., a king having the queen too, very often. Saw the dancing a while; they waltz very fast, and with small side-steps; pretty well only. Some pretty faces and *figures*, men small and measly; got home and to bed at five.

Occasionally the three friends allowed themselves some conversation in English.

*Dec. 19.* In the afternoon S. and P. came round, and we talked on religious matters. S. cannot believe now that the good person receives his reward on this earth. Would like to annihilate his soul. Says the best people are the unhappiest. I think the reward does come on this earth now and then. P. does not see where Providence ends and free-will begins.

A letter to his sister Mary, December 31, gives some interesting advice about books and reading:—

. . . About Shakespeare, I should advise to leave that till some future day. There are people of much intellect who never like Shakespeare, and it is no disgrace to you that you do not. The Lord made you, better than you can make yourself. You may understand, as you say, Shakespeare, but may reap no real good from him. I read Shakespeare very little, till I was older than you. Jim, I think, told me that he read all his plays at about seventeen and did not enjoy them. Stephen said to me a day or two since, that he read about one play a year, re-read that 15 or 20 times, and considered it quite enough for him. I should recommend the "Spectator," Goldsmith, some of the more modern works, Johnson, if you like, tho' he is puffed up and stupid, Boswell's "Life of Johnson," "The Bothie of Tober-Na-Vuolich," "Consuelo," Scott's novels, Biographies of any kind; above all, Lamb's Essays, if you like them — anything rather than Shakespeare. . . . Never force a love of literature, that is, of books written for pleasure whether high or low. Literature is a fine art. Some people care merely for information. Perhaps you are one of them. I should recommend to read the Bible a little, when you feel like it. Only a little at a time. It is very beautiful in parts. Don't do so, if it is distasteful. The "Proverbs" are good. Change your books, when you're reading. Read an hour or two in one, and then change.

I'm going to Italy in ten days [Henry wrote his father on January 21, 1857]. I'll do my best for C. [Charles Lowell] in pecuniary ways. I've got a plenty for both. Now don't shake your head. If I were to show you my map of life for five or ten years, you'd agree. It is n't covered with gold by any means. But what is money good for, if not to spend for one's friends and to help them? You've done so all your life — let

me do so too while I can, for it is in me (I have always known it) to be a close man, a miser.

It was on January 25 that Higginson and Stephen Perkins started for Florence, by way of Dijon, Lausanne, and Geneva, then Lyons, Avignon, Marseilles, and Nice. At Lausanne they visited with "Cousin Frank" Lowell and his children, and called upon the Baron d'Hauteville, an old acquaintance. They had a cold, uncomfortable sail down the Rhone, but Marseilles atoned for it: "Went on the rocks outside and sat there all the morning. Beautiful sky and sea, — *warm, very,* — pink and white rocks. Dark people. Red caps and colors strong everywhere." They took a boat for Nice, and then walked along the Italian Riviera nearly to Genoa, where Henry was too lame to walk more.

It was delightful [he wrote to his father on February 19 from Florence]: the beautiful Mediterranean always in sight on one side, the snow mountains on the other, the olive trees with their beautiful gray-green foliage, the tropical palms, the orange and lemon trees covered with ripe and ripening fruit, the houses covered with frescoes, the men and women in the bright, strong colors of southern races, driving mules and carrying baskets of fruit on their heads to market. The sun was very warm, and at the same time the air at morning and evening cool. We had overcoats without any undercoats, and were just warm enough. We used to lie on the beaches in the evening and go to bed early. Imagine this in February.

Charles Lowell was, fortunately, better, quite free from the dreaded cough, and although nervous and excited, evidently on the mend. Mr. and Mrs. Samuel R. Putnam of Boston were at Florence, as were Mr. and Mrs. William Tappan (Caroline Sturgis), all intimate family friends of the Higginsons. Henry tramped around Florence with Willie Putnam,

went to musical evenings at Mr. Francis Boott's, and was there told that "Mozart was old-fashioned and that Verdi was the composer for modern times." The diary records a long talk with Mrs. Tappan about studying music "as the best thing for me and others." Perhaps Charles Lowell was of the same opinion, for the diary avers: "We settled yesterday [March 6, 1857] that in order to do and be anything, a man must *know one thing*; which is rarely the case — no information; knowledge is wanted — being in a counting-room and reading is of no use — *learn one thing* and then you can go on without effort — else life is damned nonsense. C. wishes to study science and I music — the best things for us."

At the end of March the little Boston colony migrated from Florence to Rome — Henry Higginson living with the Tappans, Charles Lowell with the Putnams, and Stephen Perkins going into lodgings. Rome was full of other Bostonians that pleasant spring: Charles Eliot Norton, Mrs. Stowe, the Paines, the Frank Lowells, the Thomas Carys, and the Ticknors. Henry writes to his father in April: "We came in yesterday from a walk of four days among the hills, Charley, Stephen and I. Charley took a horse, which he rode most of the time." They visited Hadrian's villa, Tivoli, Subiaco, and Præneste.

It was too much for C., — indeed he came in with a cold, over-taxed, and lost by it, — not much, but a little. The last day, as I wrote you, it rained furiously. C., having a thick overcoat, rode in on horse-back at full speed — 25 miles, there being no other conveyance. He got wet to his knees only. S. and I walked in 6½ hours the whole way, and being without overcoats, were wet to the skin. We had to keep up our pace in order to keep warm, and not get the Roman fever. We could hardly move for a day or two, so very sore were our feet. Now you know that we have considerable natural *bottom*, power of endurance, and yet we were nearly exhausted (literally so) on

our arrival. The *speed*, and weight of the wet clothes had been too much for us. Three miles an hour is fair walking, three and a quarter good walking, if one is to keep it up five hours or so. Just think of C.'s doing that. Why, it would kill him!

But only a week later the boys are planning another excursion: "Mr. Hamilton Wild, son of the cashier, a young painter of much merit, we see very often and find him very merry and pleasant. He, Mr. Story, Mr. [John W.] Field, Charley L. and I are going out among the mountains for a week or so. We shall have a great time."

It is curious [Henry wrote to his father after the week was over] to watch two or three new people as we did on that trip; traveling brings out people's weak points certainly, and also many of their good ones. I am continually surprised to find how little men are, — that is, that they amount to no more, — indeed, hardly so much as the young men whom I have so constantly seen. It may be that men of settled employment, whatever it may be, put their whole strength into their work and have none to spare for ordinary occasions, for everyday life, which is wrong. Mr. Story is a man of considerable talents, and of great industry, but of no genius; so I believe. His theory is that there is more difference in will than in ability to do, and that a man can with industry do anything. On this theory he has acted, and it rests with the world to decide whether he has succeeded. He is a sculptor, a good draftsman, writes poetry, is skilled in belles-lettres and in music, is very kind and good-natured, very vain, honest and true in intention, tho' he exaggerates for the sake of a joke far too much, is rather prejudiced. He is a good fellow, and a very pleasant man and acquaintance.

Rather shrewd comment for a young man living for the first time with "artistic" temperaments!

A letter to his sister Mary shows how he is learning to see things with a painter's eye.

THE CAMPAGNA, May 12th, '57.

DEAR MARY,—

You must know that the Campagna is an undulating plain extending on all sides of Rome for twenty miles or more. Upon it are very few houses or buildings of any kind, as the malaria or Roman fever attacks the inhabitants. All about one can see the ruins of old towers, aqueducts, etc., etc., but very few trees or fences or anything but smooth pastures. In some places are large grain-fields, and fewer fields of vegetables, etc. These last fields are beautifully green, but the pastures are purple, brown, yellow, red, sometimes green; and the whole is bounded by the Sabine and Alban hills, which are branches of the Apennines. Speaking of the color of the pastures, I do not mean that they are not green just as at home; but if you will notice any green fields seen at a distance, you will see that they are not *green*, just green. This Campagna is unlike anything in the world as far as my knowledge goes: it is unlike any rolling prairie even, tho' of the same character, I fancy. Seen from Lake Albano in the Alban hills a few days since, the Campagna looked precisely like the sea slightly tossed by the wind. It is an enchanting place, which one becomes more and more fascinated by daily.

On this great plain Mr. and Mrs. Tappan and I are passing the day. A rain-storm has been threatening us for some hours, and is now pouring out its force upon the snow-capped mountains in the distance. The clouds are rolling down into the valley, and may wet us before we can get home. Mr. T. has gone into one of the many excavations on the Campagna, in order to escape the wind and to read. Mrs. T. is lying on the grass with her head against an old stone-wall, listening to the larks; and I am writing on her sketch-book to my youthful sister at home. . . .

Summer was coming, and the three lads started on a unique journey North. The diary, which comes to an abrupt close on May 25, has this entry for Sunday, May 24:—

Left Rome at 6 and  $\frac{1}{2}$  o'clk, Ch. on horse-back, St. and I with three trunks in the cart with Gusway [the horse]. Drove out on the Siena road to Baccano, where we breakfasted and nooned — 19 miles — thence to Monterose, 26 m., turned off to Sutri, 7 m. more, beautifully situated in a valley, where we saw a fine old amphitheatre cut from the rock; thence drove thro' a beautiful winding valley, woody, to Capranica, 3 m. more, and slept miserably at —. Made in all 36 miles.

They had had great difficulty in securing horses. Henry wrote to his father, after a month on the road:—

If you consider that Rome is crammed at a certain season with thousands of strangers seeking pleasure, and that there are peculiar advantages for riding in consequence of the Campagna, you will at once see that it must be very difficult or even impossible to find a horse. Charles Norton said in November even he could not get a horse for love or money. Charley proposed to me to ride from Rome north to Florence, Venice, and even to Dresden. We tried horses, and at last found two for our purposes. I had decided to drive and carry the luggage, and Stephen as far as he wished to go. Charley paid — never mind; I paid \$90 for my horse, \$50 for a strong two-wheeled gig, \$10 for my harness, and a little more for extras. It is a pretty considerable expense, but it ought to do C. much good — indeed, he is already rather better than in Rome. It is considered the best thing for him, and seems to be very good in theory. He can ride as far as he likes, and then drive in the gig. My horse is very strong. He carries 150 to 200 lbs. luggage, and all three of us, easily. Generally one of us rides and the other two drive. Two days since, we went fifty miles

under three heavy showers, and the horses were fresh as larks the next day, and went on as usual. We start from five to six (sometimes later), drive till it gets warm, stop several hours, feed our horses and eat, read and sleep till it is again cool, when we drive on. We average 30 to 35 miles a day; the horses are good for fifty any day. It cost C. for eleven days from Rome to Florence about \$17; he and his horse. Dr. Wilson says it is a good thing for C., and that's enough.

The opening paragraph of this letter, written at Venice on June 23, is delightful:—

DEAR FATHER:—

Here am I at five o'clock in the morning sitting in the piazza of St. Mark in front of a café and writing to you. Stephen, Charley and I have been talking all night. At half-past three they went to bed, and I, having washed my face and re-read all your letters from No. 19 to 23 inclusive, which came into my possession yesterday, have made a list of the items to be answered, and am now ready to begin. But first let me say that Venice is about the most charming city in the world, and this square of St. Mark is unrivaled in beauty. Around on three sides runs a colonnade in which are cafés and bright, gay shops; at the end of it is the Church of St. Mark, the handsomest church that has met my view for many a day. It is far, far handsomer than St. Peter's at Rome. For this church the sea-captains of Venice, when at its prime, were ordered to bring home whatever they could find in the world handsome and rich. Over this church the sun is just peeping; at its foot, or rather doorway, the Austrian soldiers are marching by. It is a delightful place to write, but the wind blows about my letter sadly. You see that it is already blotted tho' I had resolved to send you a clean sheet; nor can I write well here. Still, the romance of the thing must carry you through. One great charm in Venice is that you never see a horse there. One takes a gondola for a long distance.

"Both our horses have proved sound and kind," wrote Charles Russell Lowell to his mother from Venice. "Henry's was bought from a carter and has shown himself a miracle of endurance, but he has worked too hard in his youth to enjoy much now; mine, on the contrary, had always rollicked on the Campagna, had never worn shoes, and I feared the monotonous routine of labour might be intolerable to him, in spite of the solid oats he earned at both ends of the day. Madam, my fears were groundless — that *cavallino* works as well, eats as fast, sleeps as sound as his more staid companion, and life is to him tenfold less bitter; our midday siesta is a season of ever new delights to him; he rejoices in the song of the birds, in the rustling of the leaves, in the wind that shakes his mane: the other takes his rest as gladly in the shadow of a house as under the shade of forest trees. I call my animal Nosegay — nor is it physically inappropriate, as he has a bright pink spot on the end of his nose."<sup>1</sup>

As they pushed North for the Tyrol, they were thrilled by the vision of the Alps. Henry wrote: —

As we drove out of Treviso, we saw for the first time the long, deep-blue line of the Tyrolese Alps. It was splendid after so long a time on the flat Lombard plains. All day long we drove nearer to them, and at night slept at their bases. A strange feeling of excitement seizes one on getting among mountains. One not only finds delight in their beauty, their wondrous lights and shadows chasing one another along their sides, up and down their valleys, their gushing, dashing streams, their beautiful clothing of trees and turf, or, high up, of gray rock and snow, while down below their bases are covered with pastures and cultivated fields of grain, with here and there a cluster of cottages. In all this one delights, and really loves them too. But beyond it all is a wonderful exhilaration amounting to excitement about them. Else whence comes the intense, overwhelming passion to go over high passes and

<sup>1</sup> E. W. Emerson, *op. cit.*, p. 138.

mountains? Everyone who has walked much in Switzerland, and is capable of being excited, owns to the same feeling. Mr. Field, a quiet and reasonable man enough, owned to just our feelings about it. It is not foolhardiness: married men like my companions, Mr. Eliot and Mr. Field, have this feeling, yet would indulge in no foolhardiness for its own sake. It is a separate passion, quite by itself, only to be understood by those who have experienced it. It is a thing to be considered and treated by future metaphysicians.

From Salzburg, July 18, Henry writes of Lowell's improvement:—

He grows stronger daily. I think he has not been in my cart since we left Venice the 1st July. He rides the whole distance, that is, 30 to 35 miles or more daily. Uphill and down we go, and he has been some days eight or nine hours in the saddle. If the hill is very steep, he walks by the side of his horse uphill, and usually does so downhill. We went on the glaciers one day, and had seven hours of walking and climbing; he was not tired by it. We are traveling now quite at our ease, and can stop when we will. Venice did not quite agree with C. He was not well there; that is, he felt feverish and used up. It was pretty hot. But since that he has been very well.

They went down the Danube from Linz to Vienna.

I often wish you were here, old daddy, to drive about with me in the cart; it would jolt your old bones a bit, but you would soon be used to it, and only feel hungry, not sore, at the end of the day. You would enjoy very much the beautiful scenery, which is daily before us. This way of traveling is very good and cheap, reckoned day by day. I brought two Englishmen part of the way from Salzburg here; the cart is very broad and

the horse strong. We leave Vienna, where we've enjoyed ourselves much, to-morrow. It is too hot and close for C. The opera and concerts are first rate here, you know.

Turning northward again through Bohemia to Prague, they finally reached Dresden on August 31 — having been more than three months on the way. Nosegay, Gusway, and the cart were sold at half price. "We were both of us rather glad," wrote Charles to his mother, "to put off our dusty riding garments and settle down into civilization. We 'vote' our mode of traveling to be in every respect the best that young men can find, except walking with a knapsack." At Dresden they found their friend John C. Bancroft, the historian's son, who had been on an unlucky voyage to Surinam, and was now taking up painting; also Powell Mason, "Bob" Paine and the Putnam family.

Charley is to stay here about a month in a German family, John with him, painting, and I go to Vienna in a few days, for the winter certainly, in order to learn something of music practically and theoretically. I should stay with them here until C.'s departure for Algiers, but have already spent so much time in mere moving, sight-seeing and loafing, that I ought to begin immediately. I've had this plan of trying to learn a little music for some time (it is a very old idea, you know, of my former visit to Europe), and have been making inquiries about my best place of residence. My conclusion is as aforesaid — Leipzig, Berlin, Prague, Dresden for Germany, Paris and Brussels for France, and several cities for Italy, have all great musical schools and reputation, but Germany seems to me best of all lands for music, Vienna to combine most of all German cities. It is possible that I may not go there, but stay in North Germany. You may wonder at my staying in Europe apart from my friends for any such purpose. All I can say is this — I am quite tired of mere traveling, and of half studying,

and I have no desire to return to America and earn money. I will write more fully of this some other morning; to-day I am not sufficiently quiet and collected to do so.

Henry's next letter is dated from Vienna in September, and it is most significant.

DEAR FATHER, —

My last letter was short and poor, mentally and physically, for the simple reason that I could not write that day. However, it was fully time that you should know my plans, so far as they were perfected. I had formed them long before, and had been brooding over them so long, that I had assembled many reasons for and against them; hence out of this plenty grew the want of my letter.

My decision in favor of this city was thus based. Here one can get good enough, if not the best, instruction in the theory of music, and also in instrumental music; and in singing far better instruction than in any other German city. Many people go to Italy for vocal and to Germany for instrumental music, and for harmony. I hope to unite the two here, as of course many Italians come to Vienna in connection with the Italian opera-troupe and in other ways. Instruction in all three things can be taken to advantage at one time; and I deemed it wiser to make the most of my opportunities. Vienna is also said to be the pleasantest German city, which is certainly something to me. The people are half southern in their feelings and manners; none of the northern frigidity and splendor of manner. A coachman has just been dancing to a hand-organ in the courtyard. It is a rather dear place, but all Europe is growing much dearer, owing to the internal improvements, to the war, etc., etc., the same things affecting them as at home. I have been searching far and wide for a room, have seen an innumerable number of them, and have at last got one at \$10 a month. It is very well placed, has plenty of

light and air (not common in a European city), and is really cheap. There is no rate for rooms here. I've seen bad ones dear, and good ones cheap; as for instance, one poorer than mine seen to-day at \$17 $\frac{1}{2}$ . I can get my coffee in the morning and a good dinner with wine (the water is bad in some places here, and never safe) for 60 cents, and if supper is necessary, that for 15 to 20 cents more. I judged it wise to have a clean, airy and pleasant room, inasmuch as it was to be my home, sleeping- and studying-room; and as regards food, I imagine it is good economy to have really good tho' plain food, and to live at a restaurant where I am sure to get *bona-fide* articles and no *grease*. . . . I feel sure that I can live and have every advantage in instruction, under \$1000 per annum; but how much under remains to be seen. My reasons for taking this step are, I suppose, as well known to you as to me — but I will write a little of them.

As everyone has some particular object of supreme interest to himself, so I have music. It is almost my inner world; without it, I miss much, and with it I am happier and better. You may remember that I wished to study music some years ago, when in Europe before.

On my return home other studies took up my time so much that music had to be neglected much against my will. The same was true when in the store. It is quite true that I had plenty of spare hours during my apprenticeship, but it is, in my opinion, very false to suppose that a knowledge of anything so difficult as music can be gained, when the best hours of the day and the best energies of the man are consumed by the acquiring of another knowledge. Of course men more busily employed than I was have applied themselves to and conquered great things in science, in art, etc., etc., but *they* are exceptions certainly, and *I* nothing of the kind. At any rate, I *did not* learn anything more of music during those nineteen months. I felt the want of it greatly, and was very sorry to give up the thing dearest to me. When I came out here, I had

no plans, as you know. Trade was not satisfying to the inner man for a life-occupation. Out here I have consulted, and have decided to try to learn something of music ex- and internally, *i.e.*, of playing and of harmony or thorough-bass. If I find that I am not profiting at all by my work, I shall throw it up and go home. If I gain something, I shall stick to it.

You will ask, "What is to come of it all if successful?" I do not know. But this is clear. I have then improved my own powers, which is every man's duty. I have a resource to which I can always turn with delight, however the world may go with me. I am so much the stronger, the wider, the wiser, the better for my duties in life. I can then go with satisfaction to my business, knowing my resource at the end of the day. It is already made, and has only to be used and it will grow. Finally, it is my province in education, and having cultivated myself in it, I am fully prepared to teach others in it.

*Education* is the object of man, and it seems to me the duty of us all to help in it, each according to his means and in his sphere. I have often wondered how people could teach this and that, but I understand it now. I could teach people to sing, as far as I know, with delight to myself. Thus I have a means of living if other things should fail. But the pleasure, pure and free from all disagreeable consequences or after-thoughts, of playing, and still more of singing myself, is indescribable. In Rome I took about eight lessons of a capital master, and I used to enjoy intensely the singing to his accompaniment my exercises and some little Neapolitan songs.

My reasons for studying harmony are manifest. I cannot properly understand music without doing so; moreover, it is an excellent exercise for the mind. As to writing music, I have nothing to say; but it is not my expectation. It is like writing poetry: if one is prompted to do so, and has anything to say, he does it. But I entirely disavow any such intention or aim in my present endeavor — and this I wish to be most clearly expressed and understood, should anyone ask about

me. *I am studying for my own good and pleasure.* And now, old daddy, I hope you will be able to make something out of this long letter. You should not have been troubled with it, but I thought you would prefer to know all about it. It is only carrying out your own darling idea of making an imperishable *capital* in education. My money may fly away; my knowledge cannot. One belongs to the world, the other to me.

A few lines from a letter to his sister Mary, on October 1, make it clear that his estimate of his musical ability was modest:—

. . . I distinctly disavow all intention or expectation of writing music, and if I can get a clear insight into the art and a knowledge of its nature, capabilities, and place, shall be quite satisfied. It is not even my belief that my fingers will ever be limber enough to play well. If I find that my labor in it is to have no adequate reward, I shall throw the whole thing up and go home. . . . The opera [in Vienna] (as also the theatres) is the best, I think, in the world. In London and in Paris the orchestra singers, etc., are of course of the best, but the music is inferior; in Berlin everything German is to be heard most admirably and correctly given, but the fire is wanting; and in Dresden and Munich the courts are not rich enough to keep such a company as here. Besides, in Vienna during three months there is an Italian opera company singing their own music. Night before last "Der Freischütz" was given; the opera is a gem in itself, as anyone must allow, who knows it. The first act was given excellently: and then came the "Cassh," my darling singer here, a very handsome, modest, jolly girl of twenty or so, with a splendid, fresh, full, thrilling voice. She is going to be married and sang for her last time. And she was charming thro'out. Dear me! I wish that she 'd stay here at least, instead of going to Paris with her rich husband. She is, I believe, a Hungarian, and is splendid.

Henry Higginson had now been ten months away from home, and he was just settling down to what he thought might prove his life-work. His anxiety about his best friend, Charles Lowell, was in a measure relieved. His own health seemed perfect. The legacies from his grandfather and his uncle gave assurance of financial independence for a long residence abroad.

He was speculating a little, on his own account,—and, as it proved, profitably,—in indigo, jute, and other East India products. "Give me a bit of the market now and then," he had written to his father; and George Higginson liked nothing better. It must be remembered that Charles Lowell, during those months of intimate companionship in Italy, wrote home to his mother that Henry was "a born merchant." Henry's letters of this period to his brother George, who was making a business trip to Calcutta, have the same hard, staccato common sense about buying and selling that marked his addresses to the young bond salesmen of Lee, Higginson and Co., fifty years later.

Yet, while he was following keenly every turn in the Boston and London markets, his letters reveal also a strong interest in American and European politics. "Why can't you write something of Kansas and of its prospects of freedom?" he had asked his father. In that happy month of May, 1857, in Rome, he had written:—

It is well that our government disapproves of the Chinese war, for it surely seems unjust. There is no pretense even of Christianity in the dealings of nations. Governments act on a wrong principle, it seems to me. Judge Taney's decision is infamous to the last degree. Ben Curtis [who had dissented from Chief Justice Taney's opinion] for once has been honest. I do wish the North would take higher and firmer ground. It is the only course consistent with truth, and will alone save our country.

When the Indian Mutiny of 1857 broke out, George Higginson wrote: "India news gloomy, but who can doubt that the resolute will and unflinching valor of our glorious English blood will triumphantly carry the day through?" But his son was chafing at British red tape:—

The "Times" is teeming with offers from *educated, energetic* men quite ready to enlist as privates, if the government will give them a decent chance. And yet, on the old fools plod with their cursed red-tape system, "No man under 5 ft. 5 in. taken." "No man without family and fortune to be an officer," etc., etc. It is enough to make one sick to see their horrid indolence, slowness, apathy. Only last night an Englishman said to me, "Oh, they are sending soldiers out, and it will be all right directly." Fool! The lesson in the Crimea has done them no good. With the best stuff in the world, they'll make a botch of it. Why should they send men in sailing vessels, which may be five months on the way? To save a penny, they are losing many a pound and many a life. . . . It almost makes me cry to read the accounts of the abused, murdered women and children in India.

The youth was already what he remained throughout a long life: a curiously subtle combination of warrior and philosopher. The philosophy is ripe in this letter to his father, who was troubled that his younger sons were not making more rapid progress in their studies:—

Just remember, father, men are differently made, and because a boy will not study at school or win honors at college, he is not necessarily going to the devil, and his father does not need to wear "*a thorn in his heart*," or feel "*deep mental anguish*." Take the boys as they are, mend them if you can, and at all events don't worry. You only chafe yourself and them to the bone. 'T is not the way to cause happiness to anyone,

yourself or them. I should think that you would, in the course of your life, have found *pride* of any kind a most wearing, burdensome article. Do not be proud in any way; take and give; it is the usual fault of good people. There is a theory that a *proper* kind of pride is a good thing; there never was such nonsense — vanity is better. Just think once again in a quiet half-hour, and you will see it. Do not be proud or ashamed of your children; you're not responsible for them. They are beings who stand on their own legs, and have volition just like you. If they won't do what you wish, don't worry about it. I dislike exceedingly to see you day by day wearing yourself by worrying because the children are not angels. Be at peace, father, make lots of money, and enjoy the remainder of your days on this ball. If you cannot get pleasure one way, get it another.

That letter was written in August, 1857, but by October there was news from home of a far more ominous nature than defective grades in the Latin School and Harvard. It was the panic of 1857. George Higginson wrote:—

"A whirlwind of terrible power and significance is sweeping over our country, prostrating many who have been considered staunch and almost beyond harm, and handling all so swiftly that the most serious fears are entertained of the safety of large numbers. Most of the Banks south of New York and at the West have suspended specie payments. We still resolutely believe that New York and New England will stand fast, but the supply of coin is so small and the need so urgent that there is doubt, serious doubt, in many quarters. The storm is cruelly destructive. Heaven only knows when and how it may end, but it is sure to leave a host crushed and stripped and the community in an exhausted state."

Instantly Henry offered to give up his cherished plans and come home:—

Thank God *you* can lose only your year's income, at least have no capital to lose. . . . Now tell me, old father, *in a quiet moment*, shall I come home? Can I be of any use in your office to you; cannot I learn to do some of *your* work? . . . As I have already written, I am well placed and started here, but it seems to me selfish to stay here studying, leading a quiet, peaceful, industrious life, while you are struggling so hard. . . . I'd start for America directly, but it seems wiser to await your answer, which will, I am sure, be clear and conclusive.

Clear and conclusive it was: —

*Oct. 27, 1857.*

Make no change in your plans at present. You could not help us or me in office-work, for we really never had less to do. I am in firmest health. Your steady and deep-seated affection and willingness to sacrifice I needed no assurance of, nor do I from any one of my children, for well I know where the true hearts are. Yet I cannot but be touched by your words. There is nought to do but wait patiently, gather up the materials that remain and proceed as usual. All will be poorer, but in a new set of values. Don't give yourself the least uneasiness about me, my dear son, nor any of us. Thank God we are all in vigorous health. My partners give all necessary aid to our work, but report that we are truly without employment. Go on as you are, spend prudently, cutting off indulgences.

It is beautiful to read your letter written in the midst of the storm [replied the son]. No one is so calm here. You're not the old fool you think yourself. I am studying music here, that I may be like you; and that I may have some unfailing resource if money does run away.

I cannot sufficiently admire [he added a few days later] your perfect equanimity about money matters. At 53 and penniless

almost, you see your income cut down, for the present at least, without anything more than a smile. . . . I did not foresee your wonderful balance. . . . John [Bancroft] thinks you are only saved from perfection by writing an illegible hand.

George Higginson wrote on November 4: —

"I am very well off, far above many, many of those about us that we care for. So please dismiss my condition so far as regards 'ten-penny subsistence' from your mind. The children are hardly fair judges of office-work. Mine has not been severe and, for the last five weeks, very, very light; witness our receipts in way of commissions for October were so small, say \$500. Office rent, clerk hire, etc., cost us more than \$300. The truth is, the strain on nerves and anxiety of mind have been the chief burdens to all of us, especially so to my partners; but don't, I pray, indulge in reflections or expressions with regard to their performances. . . . The worst is over, I believe; there will be more failures doubtless, but on the whole improvement, more confidence and returning ease. . . . So give yourself no uneasiness, my dear child, on our account. We are mighty well off, God be thanked. The few trivial privations will be most cheerfully borne, and will do good. Besides, what are they? too insignificant to be told over. You children will not I think lose more, except in dividends and shrinkage of stocks. Stay where you are for the winter, by all means, carry out your plans, spend prudently."

By November 14 Henry was philosophizing over the general situation, in a strain which is curiously like his conversation and letters in the panic of 1907, fifty years afterward: —

Looking at the thing from a philosophical point of view, this crisis is a very useful event for our country. People stop, add up their accounts, ascertain the truth concerning their money, see their awful pace, give up much of their wicked extravagance, discover the difference between necessities and luxuries,

go to work again, and they are wiser men. It stops the too great rush into trade, shows the danger of too extended credit, proves that one man cannot well do a dozen things at a time, and that we need railroad directors who will work and not play, etc., etc. It makes more room for young men, and more room for every man, and it turns the wheel which carries the rich and the educated down and brings the poor and the ignorant up to be educated and refined. It is a most effectual instrument for putting life and energy into our Republic. If we had no such troubles, the poor people would begin to think equality, etc., was a joke, and the rich people would agree with them. Of course, much suffering results from it, but it is healthy. There was a growing belief that all that was needed to be rich was to become a merchant. In the meantime, the country is very rich and powerful, and has enormous resources. All the real wealth is still in the land.

"The fury of the hurricane has passed," the father wrote in November, "yet we shall remain in a state of lassitude and inaction for many months. The percentage of loss on Calcutta cargoes is terrific."

Highly characteristic is his letter of December 21:—

"With regard to my own state of health, never was it better. Never have I had so much flesh on my bones as now. I am entirely free from ailments. With regard to your admiration of what you call 'equanimity touching money affairs,' I thank you and John from my heart, but the commendation is *clearly and simply undeserved*. I *am* penniless almost, but such is the lot of large numbers around me. Besides, I am perfectly well, although with lessening powers of performance. I have the good-will and am sure of cheerful coöperation from many friends in our midst, from which I may reasonably look for a competency so long as health and strength are given me. The 'complacency' or 'equanimity' you allude to is the result of no forethought, self-discipline, nor mental struggle, but simply

of temperament. Would not some define it as indifference and neglect of the future? It arises in part, perhaps, from the sickening exhibitions one sees of men thrown into unhappiness and most unchristian states of mind and heart by partial losses, or apprehended losses of property, while many blessings of a far more solid character are vouchsafed to them. This senseless worry of mind about matters so fleeting is vexatious and disgusting, as if supreme enjoyment centred therein. I have been highly favored by nature and in circumstance, and ought to look kindly and charitably on the mental distresses of those of other mental states. Your pleasing views, my son, of your old father's merits, are, believe me, illusions. A just arbiter at the scales would present a widely varying conclusion.

A whimsical letter about family finances, written by Henry to his sister Mary just before Christmas, 1857, is full of "Hig-gisms," and may fitly close the chronicle of the panic year.

. . . James has written me a detailed account of your economy of living. It is good for you all. In the language of that great man, Dad, "The practice is excellent." In that luxurious style of life, which was supplanting our original simple habits, you and Frank were rapidly sinking from that high moral standard, that habit of self-denial which has formed the fine characters of your three elder brothers, of whom you are so justly proud. You were sinking into silks, velvets, Brussels carpets, beef-steaks, jams, "birds." Frank was getting a confirmed, settled belief that he was the son of a rich man, whereas his father is in reality a pauper, who would go to the almshouse from mere necessity in case of accident. Our youngest brother was becoming a Sybarite; indeed was already one. Even now it is, I fancy, hard to win him from his luxurious habits. Does he bring wood and coal in old (once used, that is) yellow gloves, and shovel snow in soiled whites? I should like to see him dressing for school. Something pretty

elaborate, is n't it? But on Sunday a beaver, yellow kids, cane, straps, very short coat, very tight *pants*. Really does he wax his moustache? His imperial is hardly *heavy* yet, I fancy.

You see the effect of wealth in your father's family. We three were brought up on the no-butter system, everything economical; you two younger ones on the lots-of-butter system and "birds" to match. Here are the gradations. George, from education and from principle, is truly careful (sometimes close in his own affairs, tho' he'd give me all his money to-morrow) with money. I, from education, am also careful, but from want of principle and from wild theories, am occasionally careless; we are both sternly opposed to luxurious living in food, clothing or *show*, and have urged our father not to indulge his offspring so much; *our James was*, from education, careful; but corrupted by the times and led away by an easy, generous, rather careless nature, inclines to luxury and extravagance, tho' his education sometimes comes up before him, reminding him of his folly; while you and Frank, from education and ease totally corrupted, have no clear idea of self-restraint or economy. You are a *pair of Sybarites*. Your common sense occasionally tells you that you are not doing right, but habit rules you.

I am in earnest for the most part on this matter. . . . There is not a glutton, gourmand, or a drunkard among us, nor is there one whose *happiness* depends at all on luxurious food, on curtains, on carpets, etc., on clothes, on show, on living *as well as our neighbors*, . . . tho' you have sometimes *made yourself* unhappy, because our house was not so handsomely furnished as Mr. A's or Mr. B's. Your father was gradually yielding to this and that wish and whim of yours or his in decoration, was keeping too many domestics, was indulging us all in too many titbits, etc., etc. He is stopped short and I am very glad. I do not wish to be vain or arrogant, but, you know, I had opposed these things frequently from a firm belief that they were injurious to us all, and that they were

*immoral*, in the full sense of the word. I could see no reason why we should *thus* spend money, when others needed it. It made me uncomfortable. I am aware that many of the conveniences, which were really luxuries, I accepted. Education, mental enjoyment, *real* enjoyment of any kind, I am in favor of; such as a summer place, etc., etc.; but *show* in any way and pampering of the stomach is to *me* disgusting. If we were getting luxurious and extravagant, just consider how far other people had advanced in that way. This trouble may cause much misery among all classes, but it is our only corrector of extravagance and luxury.

Your father is a curious mixture. Here is an instance of his extravagance, indulgence towards his children. The class-day of my class, father said to me in the afternoon, "Jim came to town this morning, and asked me for a few bottles of claret." "What did you do?" asked I. "I sent him a box" (12 bottles), said he; "but, Henry, what do you suppose he means to do with it?" "Why, confound it, old daddy, drink it, of course! What do you suppose?" There he is, all over. As aforesaid, he is a pauper, and always will be on this earth, but he has a heap of riches in heaven. You had better keep close to him there, for he will be one of the *nobs*. How they'll shout, when he goes up. "Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Ha! Ha! Ha!" and repeat several times. You just state on arriving that you are a connection of his, and there will be no further trouble.

At least so I should do, if I were going there, but I've decided to go somewhere else. It is just like a bed six feet high that we had in Italy. It was necessary to get a *run* in order to spring upon it. The room was too small for that, so we had to get on another bed, and then jump across a chasm to the high article, at the risk of falling and breaking our necks. Just so I should have to get upon a heap of my virtues, and then jump to heaven. Now my heap is not high enough to make it a very safe experiment, so I have decided to seek another bed, another place. But *you* had better go with your father. It is said to be

very pleasant there, nothing to do but to sing choruses: all the voices are naturally fine.

As I wrote Jim, you are unwise to give up the Christmas dinner. You should have some pea-soup, a big piece of halibut, and some beef and pudding, quite plain; sherry, but no champagne or anything else to drink. It would cost very little, if you will exclude *all* "fancies," and might be very pleasant, especially in these low times. Have an everyday dinner, and trust to the "flow of soul." The dinner should be an institution. . . .

The New Year opened merrily with a visit to brother Jim (who had graduated from Harvard and come to Germany for further study) and John Bancroft at Berlin. The letter is a joint product of these three boys.

*Christmas Day — BERLIN.*

DEAR FATHER: —

Merry Christmas to you all! Here are Jimmy, Johnny and I in the former's room, scribbling with fingers stiff with cold. I've no record and have forgotten all numbers. With the New Year shall number my series "B."

These lazy boys could n't be induced to go to Vienna, although Jim had never seen the place and Johnny but little; so I came up here. The boys are very well in looks and in reality. The journey up here was a bit severe, for we had a snow-storm of several days which blocked up the railroads; thus we had to wait one day to start, and then were 26 hours to Dresden instead of 23 to Berlin. The car was built of wood and pitched within and without. [*Handwriting now changes.*] When the cats are away, dear Mr. Higginson, the mice will play, and Henry having at this moment his mouth full of roast goose, the quill has fallen into my hands.

(DRESDEN, Jan. 1st.) We meant to send you a united Merry Christmas from Berlin, and fate will have it that it subsides

into a Happy New Year from Dresden. There never was such a representation of Cambridge in Dresden before. We are eight birds of passage, and found two who have nests here. And so we fill up almost a hotel, overflow the restaurants, and talk over old times and old friends, and are all agreed that Boston is better than any place here, and people beyond comparison, and that it does n't pay to come back to foreign cities where you left pleasant associations, for they thrive but poorly in foreign soil.

Henry, you will be happy to hear, has lost flesh, and now can fairly be taken as a model of grace, elegance and manly beauty. I sometimes urge him to go to Düsseldorf with me, that I may draw him in various postures; but, modest as ever, he declines.

[*Handwriting changes again.*] Henry and John have both done their parts in this letter, dear Pa, and so I must do mine. We are having a real pleasant time together here in spite of cloudy weather and a stupid theatre. Henry rushes about energetically, wakes us in the morning, makes innumerable calls, and tries perseveringly to smoke in the intervals. John and I wander around with the rest of the party, go to concerts, etc., etc.

Next week we separate and all go their way — about half the number with Henry towards Vienna and the rest to Leipzig, these to see the famous fair always held in that city at the New Year, and swarming with people from every quarter of the globe. I filled my purse well in Berlin, having an eye to purchases at the fair. Meanwhile, you are no doubt thinking of us, and that we do the same by you does not need this letter to tell you. It is a pleasant way to end the Old Year and begin the New, such a coming together as this.

But the shadow of a great disappointment was all the time deepening, a disappointment destined to affect Henry's whole career. He had written on December 1, 1857: —

When I last wrote, a fearful headache of three days' duration was troubling me. I went to the greatest physician here, Oppolzer, a very renowned man; he was out of town, so I went to a bleeder, and got rid of 8 ounces of blood — a tumblerful. He would not take any more tho' I urged him to do so. In fifteen minutes the pressure, which had been tremendous, was nearly gone, and the next day (Sunday) I was quite well. On Monday and Tuesday I played with my left arm (the one opened), and not considering the effect of such exercise, lamed it badly. I have since seen Oppolzer. He says the affliction is neuralgia (that I supposed) and gave me quinine to take daily, forbade cold bathing, ordered cold water on the head when in pain, and in the morning. I am now using these remedies, and am better. . . . I shall write less in future. The music demands eight hours a day, and I *must* study the languages and read a bit beside; then other necessary demands are made on my time, such as two lectures a week, a weekly evening at the Minister's unavoidably, etc., etc. I have nine music lessons a week, and must crowd sail as much as possible, so letters will be less frequent.

Less than a week later he wrote: —

I am industrious and in earnest about my work. My only fear is that I am trying too much at a time. However, if I can bear eight hours per day, the burden is not too heavy. My only mistake was the using of my arm too soon after bleeding, and thus laming it for three weeks. . . . I have taken up music and will give it a good trial. . . . I cannot now *wisely* listen to plans for making money. . . . Charley prophesied that I should be at home in a year, and that I should become a merchant and a rich man. Heaven knows; but I do believe that the spirit of trade is in my veins, tho' other things may be more agreeable to me. Let the thing take its natural course and don't worry about my future. . . . Believe me, I am not

vain of my own abilities, but I am sure of getting a *living* (not \$10,000 per annum) by hook or by crook. I could make myself a useful clerk for \$500 a year; but the thing takes its course.

It is a bad climate [he wrote on December 31], one catches cold constantly, and a cold in the head brings on neuralgia often, or a hot concert will do it. I shaved my face clean in the fall, and have therefore caught cold in my throat often. To-day I can hardly speak, much less sing. It is bad luck. My arm that was bled is not thoroughly strong yet. It is exceedingly provoking to lose my time so.

[A month later.] My infernal arm is not well yet, tho' better. . . . I am getting on very well, singing and writing a good deal, and also playing with my right hand. Every day I am better satisfied with my occupation, and were my arm only well, I should be contented.

[On March 11.] My arm and shoulder are still lame and prevent me from playing. I've lost five months' practice. . . .

[On June 22.] My arm is an accursed limb. I swim it daily in a fine bath, and then get it magnetized. It is a little better, but to-day for instance hurts me. . . . In September it will have to go; but only think, it will be eleven months of practice, tho' not of time, lost.

[On July 18.] I am going to some baths in Styria in a few days for my arm, by advice of my Dr. and of Oppolzer, to be there six weeks or less. . . . About my studies: I sing two hours a day, sometimes more, and have three singing-lessons a week. But the chief work is on the harmony, etc., the form of music-pieces, etc., work hardly explicable to one ignorant of composition. It is very interesting, pretty hard, and quite tedious from the amount of manual work necessary. Then I have some German books and some English always on hand. In the fall I'll play certainly.

[On August 30, from Markt-Tüffer in Styria.] About my arm, I cannot say that it is better than before coming; yet I think improvement has taken place. Henry Bigelow's opinion

I believe wrong. There is no sharp, indeed almost no pain: weakness is the prevailing sensation, particularly in the two lesser fingers and in the muscles leading thereto. . . . The foot is as it was and always will be. About returning home, father: I have already written you that my arrangements are made for another year from Sept. 1st in Vienna. How can I return when my object is music, and I've been *unable to play* at all the whole year? Besides, what is there in America particularly tempting in business, and what is there out of business for me?

[On October 19, from Vienna.] As to the arm: I've been to the first authority here on nervous diseases. . . . The arm is probably injured for life, not seriously, but so far that I shall not be able to play the piano very long at a time. . . . When I look back at those six weeks I played, I could cry heartily. It is a hard line for me; cuts deeper than you think. What I had wished for years was at hand, with every possible help; and in that time I really learned much. Now it is over forever; I can *never* play freely again. I almost wonder that I managed to bear so much as I did. If you will sit down, and play the same five keys with your five fingers for five minutes, you'll feel it sharply in your arms as I did then; yet I forced myself to play about two hours (with many intervals of course) these same things, and besides to read and play pieces two, three, and four hours a day. . . .

Thus a young man ruins himself. I came home and swore like a pirate for a day; then, coming to my senses, I decided to sing away, study composition, etc., hard, magnetize, and await results.

[On November 9.] My lessons go on, my voice and throat are in pretty fair condition. You may not remember that my throat troubled me in the spring from irritation caused by singing, and gave me cause to fear a fever. The physician warned me in time, and at last it got pretty well. . . . My voice is decent and plenty strong enough for a room but not for a hall,

etc. My studies in composition get on and are interesting, but they give me hard and long work. I am hoping to play in January, but not at all sure about it. The trouble is the most strange and inopportune infliction possible.

These comments on the physical condition of the would-be musician, when massed in this fashion, give perhaps a too melancholy coloring to the year 1858. But though it was a year of hope deferred, its disappointments were sturdily borne, and it gave opportunity for new friendships and new mental horizons. In his large, sunny room in the fifth story, looking down on one of the gayest of Viennese market-places, young Higginson entertained many promising Austrian musicians. Mr. George W. Lippitt, Secretary of the American Legation, introduced him to the family of his father-in-law, a wealthy merchant named Miller, whose nine children, ranging from ten to thirty-five, welcomed Henry Higginson and Powell Mason most cordially. The day's routine was Spartan in its severity. "I get up about half-past six and go to bed about eleven to half-past: have nine music lessons a week, and two lectures. It requires fully 8 hours a day, and that is the limit of my present power." His diet was too low for a young fellow weighing between 170 and 180: "Bread to the amount of four or five moderate bread-cakes with my coffee in the morning, at two o'clock some soup (always thin), one slice of boiled beef and potatoes, and six apples during the day, — no wine, no beer, usually no supper, occasionally a bit of pudding at dinner."

One explanation of these forced economies is betrayed in a letter to his father: "A large portion of my yearly expenses are not for myself. . . . I sometimes curse myself for trying to help others when I've not enough for my own real wants, but again think that money well used is not wasted." At the end of the year it appeared that he had "given away over \$500; don't mention this to anyone. Were the money only in my pocket now! In Tüffer I thought myself safe, but one poor

woman was ill, could n't work, and had no money. I could n't help giving her something, and then there were other cases."

His expense account for the year 1858 shows that his invested capital of about \$13,000, somewhat impaired by the panic of 1857, had brought him in only \$455.62, while he had spent upon himself \$1100: "no riotous living, tho' more than I wish it were." It should be added that his private ventures in indigo netted him in 1858 precisely \$1154.97, a trifle more than his personal expenses!

A curious example of his interest in business, coexisting with hard work on counterpoint and thorough-bass, is his scheme for getting Charles Lowell to join him in buying a small Austrian brewery, through his friend Miller. "It is really a great chance," Henry wrote. "It is possible that I could be brewer and study music too, although it is far better to do one thing at a time. . . . Vienna is certainly a pleasanter home than India or China." But Lowell "doubted his own strength," and the project came to nothing.

Among his "excellent, warm friends," in Vienna he mentions his piano-teacher, "a most captivating man and a great artist, two years older than I am; another, a violin-player in the opera, a beauty, a prime fellow. These are both Jews; and I never saw a Jew before coming here; but those whom I have known in Vienna are very talented, true, liberal in views of life and religion, and free-handed to a marvelous extent."

"You allude," wrote George Higginson in reply, "to the Jew friends you have among the musicians. You are favored, for I have rarely met individuals of that race who seemed fitted in solid essentials for an intimacy of such a character. I am thankful that really worthy ones have fallen in your way."

Both father and son, it may be noted here, agreed that it was better to burn all letters, and both father and son kept all letters with the most scrupulous care! "A letter should be answered directly, while the matter is still full of life and plastic," wrote Henry to his sister from Markt-Tüffer; and his own

letters of this period, now sad, now stoical, now touched with quaint, whimsical "Higgisms," are surely "full of life." He is angry that a rich Bostonian has died without leaving public bequests: "He ought to have helped the College and the Hospital and the Boston Library and the theatre and the model lodging-houses." His anti-slavery passion flares out in this note about Sumner, who was in Europe recovering from the dastardly attack by Brooks: —

Mr. Charles Sumner was here only a few days; I went to call on him as a fellow citizen and as an acquaintance of our family. He was very cordial and pleasant indeed. Do you know how the poor man has suffered from the brutality practised on him? He has been undergoing a very severe course of treatment in Paris, and is now somewhat better; but I fancy he is ruined for life. They burned his back in Paris, so that he could not sit in a carriage for months. Mr. Jackson, our minister here, and Mr. Stiles (the U.S. Consul) and the other Southerners always laugh, when he is spoken of, and say it is all sham on his part.

His comment on the completion of the Atlantic cable likewise shows how his mind was working on politics: —

The greatest work of the age is done: the Atlantic telegraph is laid; it is truly something for the English and our people to be proud of. Nothing like pluck; people here said that it would never be laid, etc. It is done; if broken hereafter, can be done again. Moreover, it is an iron link against the worst war for the world. If we only hold together, the other nations here may raise the devil. The English will soon get a real, able Liberal cabinet, which will put reforms into action and use; and we will have an anti-slavery government of what name you please.

So the weeks grew months and the months years, and 1858 was followed by 1859, and Henry Higginson was still waiting for the improvement that never came. A photograph of this period, given to his friend A. W. Thayer, who was in Austria working on his monumental "Life of Beethoven," tells the story of disappointed hopes better than any words. It is the saddest, the most wistful of all the Higginson photographs. But his letters during 1859 are singularly uncomplaining, and he was finding in himself and in the companionship of musical friends sources of quiet happiness. The year 1858 had ended with a jolly visit to "Jim" and John Bancroft at Dresden; but on New Year's Day he is back in Vienna, frequenting the society of his Jewish "chum" Epstein, and wondering whether the threatened war between Austria and France and Sardinia will interrupt his studies. When the Austrian army was suddenly mobilized, he wrote to his father: —

A friend of ours, physician in a regiment stationed here, the other day came to dinner and said, "We march to-morrow for Italy." By Jove, they all went at 11 the next morning — twenty hours — and another regiment marched six hours earlier than they. Our friend had quite a little practice here, was pleasantly situated, and not at all prepared for anything of this kind. He had no time to collect his bills (about \$400), and wishing very much to pay his debts, I lent him money to do so. I suppose that you 'll consider this careless; and yet for a good friend and a reliable man as he is, I could do no less.

George Higginson did not approve this loan. "If war comes," he added, "do not, as you love me, place your life in danger. Return at once. With all the new appliances at command, the game will be fearfully destructive."

When the short and bloody campaign in Lombardy was at its full fury, Henry wrote: —

You will have read ere this of the tremendous battle [Solferino] on the 24th inst., between the two great armies. Heaven only knows why the French conquered, for these Austrians fight like devils. The regiments that were in Vienna last winter are half gone to another world. . . . One of the Jäger battalions — Tyrolese skirmishers properly — went into this battle, and none came back. . . . In this war the men seem to be much embittered and some of them show great brutality. . . . You know the crimes and outrages of war, and can easily imagine all; in truth very few men of education easily restrain themselves after 12 hours of bloodshed.

Save for his characteristically reckless loans and charities, he was living very closely, and even giving a few lessons in English to eke out his income. "The concerts cost me nothing almost. I don't smoke, drink or eat costly food, do not drive, rarely use a coach, though they 're cheap and the city is large; my clothes very little."

Quite too little, the respectable George Higginson thought. "I have heard two or three times from our countrymen who have seen you in Vienna that your street dress is rather peculiar and shabby. If such is the truth, let me request you to consider more favorably what the personal appearance of one of your class should be. Dress reputably always, which you can do without approach to extravagance."

"Pray who told you that I dress shabbily in Vienna — Powell?" the son replied. "It is done from motives of economy, and because I do not much care; yet my dress has been improved within six months. In winter I rarely wear white shirts, but prefer the dark flannel shirts; that gives a shabby look, and then my hats are always bad. I'll see to it."

Nor did the father altogether approve of some expressions in his son's letters. "Let me call attention to the bad taste and vulgarity displayed in using oaths and profane expressions or any slang terms in one's letters. Do watch this tendency in

your familiar correspondence." And the merchant's sense of personal dignity was also ruffled by what will seem to many readers to-day one of the most charming and lovable aspects of the son's letters. "My dear Henry, you know I attach little importance to forms, to set rules of society, which are for the most part unmeaning, but as a matter of correct taste on your part, would it not be in better keeping to omit the terms 'old fellow,' 'old boy,' etc., when addressing me? I think so."

Henry did not reply to this criticism, but he could no more help using terms of endearment than he could help saying "damn" when that was what he meant. His characterization of his father's letters is full of generosity and sweetness: "You are a capital correspondent in quantity and quality; do not mind reproving me now and then (a rarity new to me so far from home), answer my questions, give me news and advice, and best of all a smile and a kiss at the end."

Once in a while they exchange a word about new books, the last "Atlantic," Emerson's speech at the Burns centenary, or Dwight's "Journal of Music," which Henry did not care for, although he occasionally contributed to it. "Have you seen a book by an Englishman, George Eliot," Henry writes in June, 1859, "called 'Scenes from Clerical Life,' and one by the same author just published and highly praised by the 'Times'? Eliot is a mere *nom de guerre*." And in October: "'Adam Bede' is capital; Mrs. Poyser is a character, a *person*, which is more than most authors can give birth to. The writer's real name has not appeared yet. . . . Read Thackeray's new book ["The Virginians"] — you'd like it, father."

Two business schemes of Henry's occupy much space in the correspondence of this year. One was a project for shipping light Hungarian wines from Vienna, on commission; but George Higginson, after careful inquiries in Boston and New York, found that there was no market. The other was a proffered clerkship in Herr Miller's wholesale drug business, which Henry debated very seriously, but which was suddenly with-

drawn. Yet the chief topic of correspondence between father and son was the question of coming home. The father hungered for his boy, yet he had too much New England reticence to say so, and contented himself with elaborate and ingenious moral arguments which would have done credit to one of his seventeenth-century ancestors. He fears Henry is wasting precious time: "You should return to this country in the autumn, decide on a pursuit, and take it up in earnest." Yet in this very letter he admits there is nothing encouraging in the state of trade, and that the shipping business is suffering severely. "You *must* return in the autumn. When here you may perhaps have the benefit of Mr. E. Austin's sagacious and wise management." But the sagacious Mr. Austin, though he talked kindly about a possible opening in his counting-room, made no very definite offer. "Can't you come home and get musical instruction here?" To this Henry makes no reply, and his father waxes bolder. "Come home. You cannot look for eminence in music. To stay, would strengthen selfish propensities." Voluntary exile, it appeared, was developing a streak of "soft conceit" and "vanity" in Henry; to which the youth answered rather bitterly, for once, "God knows I've nothing to be vain of." Then there was the "foot, arm and shoulder" argument: was not Dr. Bigelow of Boston a better doctor than anybody in Vienna? Are not Abana and Pharpar, in short, better than all the waters of Israel?

Very skillful, too, was the appeal to Henry's responsibilities as a brother: "George and Mary and Frank need you here." But on this point Henry seems to score: —

I do not well see in what I can help my brothers and sister. Each time that I see Jim, I am more and more convinced that he is more of a man than I, and more able to give me and others advice than I him. George is doing excellently [he was farming in Hadley], will, I believe, continue to do so, and is at any rate not at home within my reach. Mary seems to be

growing as straight as an arrow, to be as natural, loving, truly good and useful, darling a daughter and sister as anyone need be. She needs little help from me. And as for Frank, he has lately been industrious and painstaking. His last letters betray an excellent spirit about his studies; he is pure-minded, high-minded, honest, good-hearted, and as little likely to get into trouble as any boy of his age.

So the good father falls back again on his pet "selfish propensities" argument. "How ugly this is! Look at that noble fellow, Charley Lowell! Does not this blight affect his character?" As Henry does not reply to this criticism upon his best friend, George Higginson invents another variation: "Will your knowledge and devotion to music enable you to look upon it as a profession, or *to render rich services of good to society?*" (The founding of the Symphony Orchestra was the answer to that last clause, though it came twenty-two years later!) Finally, the perplexed parent fell back on the economic argument: "Come back and begin to *earn!*" And here again the son's quiet, patient answer is conclusive: —

What can you offer at home? Nothing tempting. You speak of business in no tones of encouragement; you allude to the depressed state of our shipping (sure however to be reduced if England be drawn into this war); you mention the numbers of able and excellent young men without employment. Only look at your own picture and you see the disheartening tendency of it. Think of all these aforesaid young men with more natural ability, with more and better preparation for their work, with excellent characters for workers; all more than I, and yet they are idle. What is the inference? That I should have nothing to do for a long time. . . . I give my word of honor that when I cease working I'll return to America and work. But I cannot return next fall, nor can I fix any time for that same.

The fact is, — though neither father nor son realized it at the time, — that vast changes were imminent in New England. The old commercial Boston was passing away; the new manufacturing and industrial life of Massachusetts was barely beginning. Young men in the late eighteen-fifties stood “between two worlds,” and felt powerless to direct their destiny. And there were purely personal reasons, well understood by his father, which made young Higginson reluctant to return to Boston. He wrote often about going West, as Charles Lowell had just done. “If I were to go home this fall, I should ask him to take me as his clerk. There is a great chance on the railroads.” But Lowell’s report proved unfavorable.

He does not like the West and never will. “The West may make a man strong, rock-like — never large and generous and manly.” You have the gist of the matter in those few words, and I fancy he is quite right. A land which is simply devoted to money-making cannot produce broad and noble characters. . . . Mr. Alpheus Hardy, who has just been here with his wife, said lately to me: “I know no city in the world where the merchants are so active and energetic without losing their interest in life generally and sinking into mere merchants, as in Boston.” He is an interesting man.

When George Higginson realized that a fourth winter in Vienna was inevitable, he ceased pleading, contenting himself with the remark that Henry’s decision was a “misjudgment, a serious error.” He is delighted that the clerkship with the Millers came to nothing. German merchants are “stately and precise old formalists, of ancient views and habits.” When Henry’s Jewish friends, the Epsteins, were in bereavement and financial difficulties, George Higginson wrote: “Give of money if there be need. One of the obligations assumed with the gifts which your Heavenly Father confers is to avail of such openings and dispense judicially.” The father’s letters about family

affairs are radiantly cheerful. He goes out to Cambridge in September to see Frank — entering Harvard from Mr. Sanborn's school in Concord — maintain the family tradition in the great Sophomore-Freshman game: —

"Frank was foremost in the fray. Black eyes, bruised head, lame through a heavy blow on the chest — are regarded as honorable proofs of his share in the deeds of the day. . . . Some of the blows appear to have been *stunning* ones, for after the first games he was for a time wandering about the ground unconsciously. His pluck and spirit appear to have sustained him most creditably, but the sport is brutal and alarming, and will, I trust, be moderated somewhat under later years."

Possibly that final wish was even then echoed by a certain Harvard instructor, of whom Frank writes to Henry: "Charley E. is our mathematical tutor, and is a very fair, gentlemanly, and pleasant one too. Though cold as an icicle,<sup>1</sup> he is liked by the class better than any other one."

So the year runs by in Boston, the year of Prescott's death, and Washington Irving's, and of Theodore Parker's breakdown, and of President Walker's resignation, and of the founding of Agassiz's Museum of Comparative Zoölogy in Cambridge, and of John Brown's raid on Harper's Ferry. "Noble old John Brown," George Higginson wrote — "heroic, unflinching." And his boy's own future was to be shaped by that tragedy in Virginia.

I would hardly believe [replies Henry] that Brown of Kansas would have tried such a thing. It is a pretty mad plan, but the slaveholders deserve it. Hang them! they've no right to keep such a firebrand alive in the midst of our country. The Southerners are infernally pig-headed. . . . For the fine old man we can have but one sentiment; he was a real hero and has immortalized his name. The Southerners may curse and swear as they like; he is worth all of them put together, and his work will be accomplished in time.

<sup>1</sup> One of the earliest appearances of the "icicle" myth about President Eliot,

The New Year began happily for Henry with the usual holiday visit to "Jimmy and Johnny" and five or six other Boston boys in Dresden and Berlin. But he had not reached Vienna again before his father opened the 1860 campaign of arguments for returning home. "Your place is *here* — in readiness for *work*." He admits that, although Lee, Higginson and Co. have not a dollar of indebtedness, factory shares are low, and the Western railroads in trouble. Yet his boy must come back. It is "indolent" to remain. "Choose your calling and pursue it with zeal and perseverance." The "selfishness" argument reappears, and there are new turns in the economic argument. Henry's income for 1859, it appeared, was only \$450, and his expenses apparently \$1800. "Of the money left you in 1856, by Uncle G., but \$2500 is now available. How long that will answer for \$1500 to \$1800 per annum, you can answer. You have played too long in Vienna. I therefore pray you to retrieve the error without delay and choose some occupation that will enable you to pay your way." He thinks Henry has been "careless in sending accounts, unmercantile," and delivers a lecture on "the indispensable necessity of method, order and promptitude." Then, humorously enough, Baring's accounts come to hand, and tally precisely with Henry's figures. His expenses had been but \$1200, and his credit with Baring's was excellent. So the father takes back his lecture: "I hasten to acquit you of negligence."

But then follows the only passage in which George Higginson ever seems to be suspicious that his son is not wholly frank with him: —

"I am in the dark as to the precise character of your studies. What ties have you at Vienna? Have you not led a sober, discreet and blameless life there? You have an enlightened conscience, a just sense of true manliness, of the place you ought to fill in our community. Why then hesitate? Come back, place yourself in the best position, and render all the good you can to those about you as a good Christian and

citizen. . . . I have long intended to ask you where you pass your Sundays. Where do you go to church? Answer my queries about your habits, and think seriously of duties on *this side*."

Henry's reply to this letter, on March 1, is quiet, affectionate — and imperturbable.

I've long intended to go at about this time, but have avoided saying anything about it, because my plans might have been altered by circumstances and thus you disappointed. I shall go to Düsseldorf to Johnny, stay with him until the weather is warm, and then make a foot journey in France. . . . Up to the present time, almost, I have hoped to be able to play, but it cannot be; and therefore I, seeing that my musical studies cannot be prosecuted to advantage without playing, have determined to leave here. If you consider the whole thing, and remember that I enjoy in the depths of my soul music as nothing else, you'll easily comprehend my stay. . . . You ask about churchgoing; there is no place for me to go, as the English service is very unpleasant to me. I do go to the Catholic churches somewhat. But I ought to tell you that I should hardly go if there were twenty churches, for I do not like it. . . . I've collected quite a quantity of books (second-hand) which will be valuable to others and to me, and which are to be got very cheap. You once desired me to bring home something for each cousin (of the 200 or 300?) and also some books for the college. . . . He who is fond of books and has been for an hour in an old bookshop will understand how I have got so many together.

He was in no hurry to start, lingering a few weeks to enjoy a visit from brother Jim, and "an unusual number of concerts, among them the first one of my chum Epstein in many years, given by him on his own account." But his thoughts were turning homeward at last. He writes in April: "At home

you are all expecting the different nominations for the Presidency; it will be a strange election and much depends on it. But after all one will hardly get Mr. Seward in, if he be put up; he is more likely to be in the Cabinet than in the White House." Mr. Seward, by the way, had been in Vienna in October, 1859, and Henry found him "a very interesting man, pleasant, kindly, funny, simple, straightforward; ought to be the next President."

"I don't believe that you have any idea how much father wants you to come back," writes Frank. "He says almost daily, 'I do wish that Henry would come home.'" And Frank himself is anxious to have his big brother back before September, to coach his class football team: "to help us in the football as you did Jim. We shall have to fight like the d——." Frank's "training weight," it appears from this letter, is 120 pounds. Only a little while now, and all three brothers will be fighting on far other fields than the Harvard Delta!

By the middle of May Henry was in Düsseldorf with Du Maurier and John Bancroft, who had come into an inheritance "and can paint on in peace. . . . Have you anything in prospect for me, daddy dear? Calcutta is too slow and too dull for me. . . . If the wines go [this was a second scheme for importing wine from Hungary] one might easily unite the two — in fact, the whole would not be work enough for anyone really desirous to be busied. . . ."

By July Henry is in Paris, and following keenly the political developments at home:—

If the Republicans be once in, they'll hold office long enough to kill this question of slavery. I read portions of Mr. Sumner's speech,<sup>1</sup> *i.e.*, the statistical parts, which are dreadful in their native inborn strength, but the whole comes too late, I fancy. The evil has gone too far to be thus discussed. Mr. Adams's speech pleased me very well indeed; it is strong and temperate in its tone.

<sup>1</sup> On the "Barbarism of Slavery."

But he was also giving himself a full draught — for the last time for many a year — of his favorite pleasure. He writes to his Aunt Harriet (Mrs. S. T. Morse) : —

I am again in this most beautiful of cities, going continually to theatres, and operas (*comique*), which are indeed the strongest attraction of Paris for me. Such acting as one sees in low and high comedy is hardly to be found elsewhere; a half-dozen people perhaps in Vienna and a few in Germany play in the same finished way. Yet the astonishing thing about the acting is, that it is not acting; it is just Parisian life on a stage for us to look at. . . . Music is not to be heard to advantage here; the opera-comique is very nice indeed, and the Lyrique too, but the grand opera is very second-rate in music and in singers; the orchestra and the decorations, as also ballet, are excellent. At the Italian opera a company of old and second-rate people are advertised; the best go to St. Petersburg for the winter; Grisi still sings, but should be buried; four years ago she was dreadful from weakness, and now —! Mario is done too, they say, tho' he will sing still. At Vienna both the German and the Italian companies were far better than here. Indeed M'lle La Grua, whom I heard there in April in the Italian opera, is for me the greatest singer that I ever heard; greatest as artist, for her voice is small, just as those of Jenny Lind, of Sontag, of Malibran and of most very great singers have been. (You'll hear a great voice in the Czillag from Vienna, mezzo-soprano, just engaged by Ullman for America.) In addition the La Grua acts wonderfully; her Norma stands above that of Grisi, I think, impossible as it may seem. I wrote to "Dwight" an account of her, which you may have seen. One great objection to the Paris theatres for me, is that the representations last 4 to 5 hours, whereas two and a half are quite enough. It is debilitating and injurious to stay so long in a theatre.

Powell writes me [he says in writing his father from Paris] that he sees nothing which a safe and honest man can begin with just now; he means of course a young man opening his course in life; but I *must* find something or I shall go into the Insane Asylum. I'd not live at home without employment for any possible reward. . . . I've always counted on doing something, with you, an old hand who has burned his fingers, to give me advice in my movements. . . . Suggest something if you can.

But George Higginson makes no discoverable reference to a business opening, though he composes long and eloquent letters about "your dear, loving, ever-faithful and devoted old Grandmother [Lee]," who had died in June. Henry had been particularly fond of her.

There never was such a grandmother [he writes his Aunt Harriet (Mrs. Lee's daughter)], and there will not be soon again. I remember long ago Dr. Dexter, not an impressionable or sentimental man, said to me, "Among the few people whom I should take real, honest pleasure in seeing again at home, are your grandfather and grandmother Lee"; and he went on to eulogize them. You'll not think that I'm writing fine phrases or flattering you when I say that your children are greatly, truly blessed in their parents, all devoted to them; but they've lost this sunshiny, thoughtful, sympathizing grandmother, who has done so much for us. I used sometimes to wonder that grandmother could even understand many of our whims and notions, not existing in her day and often too absurd to be tolerated at all. Yet she comprehended them, sympathized with them, and then merely said, "One of these days you'll change your mind and not think so"; and we went away thinking dear grandmother a little absurd, at least old-fashioned, and waked up one day to find her wisdom staring us in the face; whence we may perhaps draw the moral to

"Make sure of children's hearts and let them work out their own notions in peace; the truth is sure to come out finally; and one cannot hasten it by command or opposition."

A typical "Massachusetts in 1860" view of Lincoln is found in George Higginson's letter of July 15.

"You ask about the Presidential candidates: the Republican party will, from present sight, carry the day. *Mr. Lincoln* is of Springfield, Illinois — of Kentucky birth, but long a consistent and earnest *Free-soiler*. *Not* an abolitionist. He is a very respectable man, hardly known out of his state, but held in high esteem there. *Hamlin* is of Maine, a former Governor — late Senator at Washington, a sound and very good man. It was a matter of expediency with the party, in which Mr. Seward, notwithstanding the unquestionable disappointment, fully and frankly concurred."

Henry had been in Concarneau in Brittany with John Bancroft, then at St. Helier on the island of Jersey, and now, after the brief stay in Paris, he tarried in London, waiting for passage on the Arabia, the boat which had brought him to Europe with such high hopes just four years before. She sailed from Liverpool for Boston on November 17, 1860. Lincoln had been elected eleven days earlier, although Higginson did not get the news until he reached Halifax. A new epoch was at hand.

## CHAPTER V

### THE CIVIL WAR: FIRST PHASE

"I said: '*I'm going!*'"—H. L. H.

YET from November, 1860, to the firing upon Fort Sumter on April 12, 1861, the months dragged. The public uncertainty as to the policy of the incoming administration was reflected in the business situation, and nowhere more noticeably than in Boston. Everybody was marking time. No one ventured forward. And Henry Higginson, aged 26, was as far from finding employment as ever. Charles Lowell, who had given up a railroad position in Burlington, Iowa, and was turning iron-master at Mt. Savage, Maryland, had tried to comfort him by writing: "Don't bother with plans, but be governed by circumstances. Damn it, a man who has got himself up as well as you have ought to be happy anywhere." On December 28, Lowell wrote from Mt. Savage:—

"If you have any respectable mode of getting through your days, and do not feel yourself in danger of becoming a demned disreputable, dissatisfied loafer, I should advise you to be in no hurry to plunge into trade. Cotton is unthrone, but Corn is not yet King, and meanwhile Chance rules. The South is just now a mere mob, and *no man* can tell whither a mob may rush."

Early in February, 1861, Henry himself wrote to his brother James, who was still in Germany: "Do not hurry about coming home: our country is in an unfortunate state, and offers little employment or enjoyment until something decided and strong comes." He goes on to describe his good fortune in selling profitably an invoice of wines which he had imported as a venture:—

In consequence therefore of this success, I've sent for more wines and shall try to make a living out of it; in these times one must earn a living as one can. . . . What a howling about the cotton there is! Do you know that the whole cotton crop is 5 per cent in value of our annual products? It is a fact worthy of note, Jim, that the N. Western Senators and Rep. are the men who are most decided and clear in pronouncing their sentiments against the South; they have talked of coercion and war, and they'll be very lively, when the fighting comes, *i.e., if it comes.* . . .

Meantime trade is in a rather stagnant state, from the uncertainty in the future rather than from any inherent difficulty. For one like myself seeking occupation, nothing is easily to be found. N. York is probably the best chance, and even she does not appear very tempting at the present time. Besides, I am loath to quit our Puritan city after all, unwilling to give up my numerous valued acquaintances and my friends. Society is in some respects much pleasanter to me than formerly, and the easy, familiar converse with girls affords me much delight; here I am known at least in my own circle, and am trusted as a son of my father and a brother of James J.; in N.Y. I must begin all over again, must seek far and wide and work hard at society before gaining the advantages here in my hand. Perhaps it may be my course after all, but I've seen enough of figuring among strangers not to cling to friends with all my strength.

But this disappointed musician, living now in his father's house in Chauncy Street, and often confined there, in fact, by a renewal of the old trouble with his foot, was not fated to become a wine-merchant in "our Puritan city," or to "begin all over again" in New York.

The first shot at Fort Sumter changed all that. The news reached Boston on April 13. On the 22d, Henry writes to his brother: —

DEAREST JIM, —

We are in for the fight at last and we will carry it thro' like men. One week ago to-day appeared the President's proclamation calling on the states for troops. To-day Washington is cared for, Fort Monroe garrisoned, and the route to Washington held open. Never in my whole life have I seen anything approaching in the slightest degree to the excitement and the enthusiasm of the past week. Everything excepting the war is forgotten, business is suspended, the streets are filled with people, drilling is seen on all sides and at all times. Our Massachusetts troops were poured into Boston within 12 to 24 hours after the command was issued from here, and were the first to go on and the first to shed blood. May the devil catch those Baltimorean rioters, the cowards! On the 19th April, the anniversary of the Lexington fight, our first men were shot in Baltimore.

'But you should have seen the troops, Jimmy: real, clean-cut, intelligent Yankees, the same men who fought in '76, a thousand times better than any soldiers living. They left their wives and children in some cases without a farewell, and *marched thro'* to Washington. We've been told of our degeneracy for years and years: I tell you, Jim, no more heartfelt enthusiasm or devotion was to be found in '76 than now. *Everyone* is longing to go. One man walked 100 miles to join a volunteer company raised and gone between Wednesday and Sunday. Two thousand Irish volunteers have been raised in Boston, besides many companies of Americans and Germans and French. One hundred Germans put their names down as volunteers in a half-hour at a small meeting which was held Friday. Money is forthcoming, *everyone* is making clothes for the troops. Yesterday sailed from N.Y. 5000 troops (1200 from here, commanded by one of my classmates); they say 500,000 people were present to see them march down Broadway and sail. That famous N.Y. 7th regiment is holding the R.R. to Washington from Annapolis. A regiment of 800 N.Y.

firemen has been raised in two or three days, and will go as skirmishers to-morrow or to-day. The Ohio troops are in Washington, and the Westerners are coming on perfectly wild. *Every* slave-state has refused troops; we do not want them. The Southern army is, they say, well-drilled: we may lose at first, but they will be wiped out from the face of the earth in the end. We want arms sadly; those villains have stolen everything that they could find in our armories and arsenals. And for us — George will, I hope and trust, finish his house at Lenox before moving . . . father is of course too old. I have been laid up all winter with a sprained foot, which is still weak, but I 'll go if I can march possibly. I 've committed myself to a regiment of volunteers to be raised and drilled in our harbor before going. It is the best way, if they are not wanted immediately, for then a disciplined body of active troops will be opposed to the enemy, instead of raw recruits. Jim Savage will go in this regiment as an officer. This foot has been a great nuisance to me for months, and now may prevent my going, for a lame man will not be accepted. And now, Jim, you must decide for yourself whether you 'll return just yet or not; you might wait a few months to advantage. There will be little business in any way for beginners until the war is over, I suppose: the first quota is gone and the second will be off also before you can reach here. Then will come much drilling and preparation for the future: the war will, I fancy, be very severe, but of short duration. You might get all possible information as to the muskets and rifles with sword-bayonets to be got in each country, Germany, France and England; we must import from Europe to meet our immediate wants. Send this letter to Johnny with my love: I 've not time to write him to-day and he 'll want to know of these things. Father is very well indeed and drills hard, with a view to teaching others — as also Frank. Father gets dreadfully excited; indeed so does everyone. My best love to you, Jimmy. Yrs.

H.

The President's call for troops had found Massachusetts ready. In January, 1861, Governor Andrew had begun to prepare the state militia for service; in February he had secured authority from the Legislature to utilize these militia outside the limits of the state on requisition of the President. Lincoln's summons reached Boston on Monday, April 15; and on the morning of the 16th the militia regiments had reported in Boston for duty. On the 17th and 18th four of these regiments started South. It was quick work.

Major George H. Gordon, a graduate of West Point who had served in the Mexican War, but had since resigned from the army and entered upon the practice of law in Boston, had rendered great service to Governor Andrew in the organization of these State troops. But he saw clearly that the militia system was inadequate to the strain now laid upon it.

He wrote in his reminiscences of the Second Massachusetts Regiment: <sup>1</sup>"My course was plain. It was to raise a regiment modeled upon the regular army of the United States — an enlistment of men; an appointment of officers; and an indefinite term of service. By what law such a regiment was to be held together, fed, paid, clothed, I knew not: there was no law, but there was something above law, something that makes law — necessity. So I addressed myself to two essentials in getting together and organizing in form a regiment of men; and these were, first, the assent and cordial coöperation of Governor Andrew to raise it; second, the promise of the General Government to accept it."

Governor Andrew had already assented on that fateful Monday, April 15, and by the 30th President Lincoln had accepted the proffered regiment. "So far as I know," wrote Gordon in 1883, "this offer of a regiment of citizens of Massachusetts, to fight for an indefinite period, — organized, armed and equipped, a present from the State, — was the first offer of the kind made in this War of the Rebellion."

<sup>1</sup> *Brook Farm to Cedar Mountain*, Boston, 1883.

It will be noted that this action of the President antedates his proclamation of May 3 asking for thirty-nine regiments of infantry and one of cavalry, to serve for three years, or during the war. The men of the Second Massachusetts, therefore, always considered themselves the first of the three-years regiments to be accepted and mustered in by the United States. There was some irregularity in the dating of commissions, which gave rise to later controversy. Gordon's commission as Colonel of the Second was officially dated May 24, while the commission of the Colonel of the First Massachusetts was dated May 21. Yet Henry Higginson, for instance, who, as we shall see, became a second lieutenant in Company D of the Second, was mustered in on May 11. But the fame of the Second Massachusetts was to be won by four years of desperate fighting. It does not turn upon the precise chronology of commissions.

Henry Higginson's own share in the raising of the regiment was typical of the hour and the man. He had been a member of the Salignac Drill Club, with James Savage and many other friends of his boyhood. Savage was a sergeant in the Club and particularly efficient, though his reticence and dislike of war-talk kept him silent. Long after the war, Higginson wrote:—

No one living can forget the feeling of everyone when the news of the capture of Fort Sumter, and then of the call for Volunteers, came. We all said little. Those who were going knew their own minds; those who were not going were thinking it over. . . . The call came Monday. . . . I well remember seeing the first of our Volunteers come from the Providence R.R. Station, where they had just arrived. Odd-looking, long, lean fellows, something to laugh at and to envy. It made me laugh and cry, grow hot and cold, and so I followed them to State Street, crowds looking at them as they passed without music. In a minute a company of New Bedford men came by with a band. That was splendid. How the crowd cheered as

they marched up the street, and up went the windows to the tops of the houses where the printers and working people are, and out came a yell, such as I had never heard and only dreamt of! If these poor people felt so, how should others with health and without a bond feel? Who would stay at home and be counted out of the fight? I had sometimes been surprised during the winter to hear Jim Savage say that he should not fight if the South did secede. "Let her go. We should be better without her." "Perhaps his reasoning is sound," thought I, "but you just cannot stay at home and not fight in such a cause. I can't and you can't." But I never said so. When the time came, he just said, "I'm going," and I said, "I'm going." Of course we were.

Well, the excitement and enthusiasm increased. Jim saw Gordon about himself and about me, and was promised commissions of Captain and 1st Lieutenant for us. In a few days we were recruiting in a side street near Faneuil Hall, and later at Fitchburg, where Jim was known. The night before going, I had told father of my commission, and had quite astonished him. We engaged our room, borrowed a flag, got out our posters and spent the next day in driving through the country, distributing and pinning them to fences. We drove to Jim's house at Lunenburg.<sup>1</sup> I don't suppose he was ever there again. . . .

Many of Henry Higginson's dearest friends were enrolling in "Gordon's regiment." Greely Curtis seems to have been the very first applicant. Wilder Dwight enrolled and began to raise subscriptions on April 18, and it was he who went to Washington on April 25, with G. L. Andrews, — a West Pointer, now an engineer, and the lieutenant colonel of the proposed regiment, — to secure the President's acceptance. C. F. Morse, Henry S. Russell, R. G. Shaw, William D. Sedgwick, Richard Cary, Richard C. Goodwin, T. L. Motley, S. M.

<sup>1</sup> "Jim's" father, the Hon. James Savage, President of the Massachusetts Historical Society, had a country place at Lunenburg, not far from Fitchburg.

Quincy, Stephen Perkins, were all going in. Recruiting offices were opened in Boston and elsewhere on April 25, each man who had been promised a captaincy, for instance, engaging to raise his own company. Savage and Higginson had slow work at first in Fitchburg — that “infernal little hole,” as Henry writes to his father on May 6. The difficulty was that the best men had already enrolled in the State militia and were expecting to go in the Ninth Regiment. But Captain Savage and Lieutenant Higginson — technically uncommissioned as yet — were tireless. “Usually James Savage stayed in the office, where men came in, talked with him, and signed the articles to go with us, or refused; and I went from place to place collecting men as I could — to Leominster, Shirley, Hopedale, and many other towns.”

On May 14 they marched the first detachment of Company D, 42 men, into the new regimental camp at Brook Farm at West Roxbury. Captain Abbott’s Company A, from Lowell, had beaten them by three days. They found Wilder Dwight serving as Major of the Regiment, Greely Curtis was Captain of Company B, and C. F. Morse (afterward Colonel of the Second), First Lieutenant. “Bill” Sedgwick got the first lieutenancy in Company D, Higginson being Second Lieutenant. “Bob” Shaw was First Lieutenant in Company F, Richard Cary was Captain of Company G, and Henry Russell First Lieutenant. In Company H, T. L. Motley was First Lieutenant, and Stephen Perkins Second Lieutenant. The regimental surgeon was Lucius Manlius Sargent, Jr., who was afterward, as captain, major and lieutenant-colonel of the First Massachusetts Cavalry, the superior officer of Henry Higginson and Charles F. Adams, both of whom will have much to say about him. The assistant surgeon was Lincoln R. Stone, a comrade for whom Henry Higginson cherished a lifelong affection. The chaplain was the Reverend A. H. Quint, who afterward wrote the history of the Regiment.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Record of the Second Massachusetts Infantry*, by Alonzo H. Quint, Boston, 1867.

Brook Farm — rechristened "Camp Andrew" out of compliment to the Governor — had seen queer gatherings twenty years earlier, during the Transcendental picnic ironically immortalized by Hawthorne's "Blithedale Romance." But its aspect during May and June was queerer still.

It was droll work [wrote Higginson afterward], and seemed like a frolic to the men at first. They stood guard a little, ate, slept and played leap-frog. If a man was tired of walking his beat, he'd shout, "Who'll take my place?" and a dozen would answer, "I will." In the afternoon some tents were pitched and we took possession of them. I got a bit of bread and meat for supper, and it was a day or two before I knew of any regular meals, although our men fared sumptuously. The first night in camp was very exciting and pretty cold. I hardly slept. . . . Very many funny incidents occurred. One evening I was officer of the guard and went round with the patrol, taking up the sentries. All was going regularly until an old man named "Death" refused to be relieved and fall in. "I'll not leave my post." I told him it was orders. "No." I explained — in vain. I ordered. "I may be killed, but I'll never desert my post alive." I threatened punishment, but in vain, and as soon as I approached him, he lunged most vigorously at me with his bayonet. So I left him, and reported to the officer of the day, who went with me to try his authority. "Death" repeated that we might overpower him, but he'd never leave his post alive. So we rushed on him and upset him, and he was put in the guard-house. . . .

Gradually some degree of order was secured, for the colonel and lieutenant-colonel were West Pointers, who knew their business. The rations were good, the equipment of Enfield rifles was adequate, and the regiment was well clothed in the regular uniform of the United States Army. As a concession to the traditions of the Massachusetts militia, the men of each company went through the form of electing their own officers,

although these officers had been already appointed and commissioned by the State. Some of the companies were not full, and as more recruits were needed, Lieutenant Higginson was detailed to drill a club of Germans in South Boston. He gave his orders in their native language, and was amused to note that, when they were directed to choose their officers, each man voted for himself. Most of these men went into the Twentieth Regiment subsequently, and did excellent service.

Each day at noon the young officers at Brook Farm reported to Lieutenant-Colonel Andrews for instruction, reciting their lessons to him in a little farmhouse near the gate of the camp.

We were usually so tired that we could not recite, and we had really no time to study, but somehow or other we learned what we had to do. He used to catechize us about all sorts of points, give instruction about the drill and about the control of the men, the feeding of the men, and many other smaller points. Men were taught to stand up when they were spoken to, to stand in the presence of officers, to wash themselves properly, and, in short, were disciplined. Presently, our drill became so attractive that people used to come and see us, and the parades which were given every evening were visited by a large concourse of people — friends and neighbors.

On June 26 the "friends and neighbors" all appeared for the ceremony of presenting the United States flag to the regiment. Mr. J. Lothrop Motley made the speech of presentation, and Colonel Gordon an eloquent response. According to the "Boston Advertiser," "The regiment was drawn up in line of battle, and presented a fine and soldierly appearance. Their movements all indicated a high state of efficiency and drill." Let us hope that the reporter was qualified to judge; at any rate, one platoon was commanded by the Second Lieutenant of Company D, the First Lieutenant being indisposed. It was a proud afternoon for George Higginson and his son.

One brief note to the father is now the only discoverable letter written by Henry from the Brook Farm camp. Its first sentence is: "Will you get Charley a pistol from me?" Charles Lowell had just secured a captain's commission at Washington, in the Third United States Cavalry. The last sentence is: "Ask S. [Stephen Perkins] to pass the night, and give him some Hungarian wine."

Late in the afternoon of July 6 the regiment got its orders to move South. "Camp Andrew" was broken up, and the ghosts of the Transcendentalists once more took possession of that deserted hillside.

On the 8th of July — a very hot day — we took the train to Boston, marched through the city, rested a while on the Common, and then took the train again for Providence and the boat to New York, where we arrived in the morning. There we rested in the park, where now the post-office is, and by and by, when our wagons had been got onto the boats, we went across the bay to Elizabeth, and again took the train, and turned up the next day at Hagerstown, Maryland.

Higginson's commission as first lieutenant dated from July 8. I have often heard him say that, among the thirty-six commissioned officers of the Second, there were not half a dozen who went South with the intention to free the slaves; that they went to save the Union, but as soon as they reached Virginia, they all turned "anti-slavery." Higginson himself had, as we know, been "anti-slavery" from boyhood. His remark about the other officers is corroborated by the letters written from the front by Chaplain Quint in October. "Our men are fighting for the flag, not for the abolition of slavery. So far as the army feels, slavery is not a prominent theme or thought. The supremacy of law, and the honor of the stars and stripes — these are the soldiers' principles. . . . At the same time, if there is any work which our soldiers loathe, it is the returning

of fugitive slaves. They despise it. . . . But they are not fighting for 'abolition.'" Yet when this letter, which originally appeared in the "Congregationalist," was reprinted in 1864, the author added this significant footnote: "I was right *then*, but I should not be right to use the same language *now*. The feelings of the army have gradually and totally changed. Few soldiers of any rank but now detest slavery and mean to fight it."<sup>1</sup>

The Second Massachusetts saw hard fighting enough before Colonel C. F. Morse marched them into Richmond on May 11, 1865, four years to a day after the first detachment reached Brook Farm. Of the thirty-six original officers, but four remained, and of the thousand men first enlisted, less than a hundred entered Richmond. But from July to October, 1861, — when Lieutenant Higginson was transferred to the new First Massachusetts Cavalry with the rank of captain,— the Second marched and countermarched and camped along the Potomac, almost without firing a shot. Fording the Potomac at Williamsport on July 11, they reported at Patterson's headquarters, and started for Winchester to face Johnston.<sup>2</sup> But Johnston easily effected his union with Beauregard at Manassas, and on the 21st came the battle of Bull Run. The Second Massachusetts had been ordered back to hold Harper's Ferry, and was the first Northern regiment to enter it.

That night I was on guard [wrote Lieutenant Higginson]. As I had not been to sleep the night before, the task was not easy. I sat on a fence-rail, and whenever I began to fall, I waked up. I walked up and down and did everything to keep myself alive, and certainly went to sleep part of the time while I was walking. . . . Seventeen regiments of three-months

<sup>1</sup> See A. H. Quint's *The Potomac and the Rapidan* (Boston, 1864), p. 49.

<sup>2</sup> "The 2nd Massachusetts Volunteers, a three-years regiment, came to us here [Martinsburg] and I for the first time saw a well-disciplined volunteer regiment. They were dressed and equipped in Regular Army fashion and were a splendid-looking set of men." — Col. T. L. Livermore, *Days and Events* (Boston, 1920), p. 15.

men have crossed the river for home, and we are thankful for it. Such a set of untamed and undisciplined wild-cats you never saw. They steal, they get drunk. We have four companies in the town guarding the houses and stores against these robbers. . . . Talk to the men as we will, they will not take care of themselves. Jim [Savage] is under the weather just now and will have to be off duty a day or two. Sedgwick stands it well so far. Stephen has been starving considerably, as indeed we all have. . . . I am well and strong and shall bear more work than most of the men. The want of good officers is surprising. . . . I am glad of the defeat at Bull Run, and believe it will be productive of good to us.

The lieutenant's list of articles that he wishes his father to procure for him in Boston reads curiously, now that sixty years have passed. It includes "a buffalo-robe," "an India rubber blanket," "a pair of strong suspenders," "three pairs of 1st Lieut. patent Infantry shoulder-straps, two pairs of Captain's ditto," "a bit of wash-leather to polish my sword," "one pair of thin cotton drawers." That "two pairs of Captain's ditto" shows pleasing forethought for what might happen.

Meanwhile the Second Regiment marched back and forth under General Banks's none too competent directions, and "prayed daily for a fight." The weather, fine at first, grew cold, and sickness increased ominously. There was a good deal of drinking, and in some of the regiments brigaded with the Second a marked lack of discipline. Colonel Gordon discovered in one of these regiments, "dressed in full uniform and enrolled as a soldier regularly mustered into the service, a young woman of about eighteen years of age. She had been in the regiment about a month; until within a day or two there had been no suspicion of her sex. I am not aware that her presence tended to elevate the standard of character in her company. She could smoke a pipe, and swear like a veteran."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Brook Farm to Cedar Mountain*, p. 57.

Lieutenant Higginson and Captain Greely Curtis had plenty of court-martial duty to perform.

I was officer of the guard at Darnestown [wrote the former] just before the battle of Ball's Bluff. A private who had been disorderly in the ranks was sent to me by his captain to be punished. He came very drunk, talking and swearing. I ordered him to keep still and march on — as a precaution, though I did n't think much about it, taking the cap from his charge. He walked to the end of the beat, turned, put another cap on his gun, and leveled the piece at my belt, saying he'd blow a hole through me. There was nothing to do, we could n't reach the man in time, and my sergeant standing by had no gun. I looked steadily at him and said peremptorily, "Bring your piece to your shoulder and march on." Then the instinctive habit of obedience told, even crazy-drunk as the man was. Clap went the piece to his shoulder, and on he marched towards us. My sergeant then took the musket away and Martin marched until he dropped. He was afterwards court-martialed, but let off, and I see him now, an English Jew, down-town, selling pictures. It would have been an eternal disgrace to our regiment if an officer had been shot by a private.

On September 14 he wrote his father: "The 20th Mass. has just passed up the River about two miles from here. Paul Revere [a Latin School and Harvard College friend] said that he had not taken off his clothes for three days; he will think nothing of ten days soon without a change." It was only five weeks later that Major Revere, wounded and captured after desperate fighting at Ball's Bluff, was sent to Libby Prison and to the horrors of the Henrico County Jail, where the lack of a change of clothing was the least of his troubles. He was afterward exchanged, and fell at Gettysburg.

Higginson himself saw the aftermath of this disaster at Ball's Bluff, where the Twentieth Massachusetts suffered so terribly. He pictures it with a sort of Tolstoyan simplicity: —

One evening, just after drill, we were ordered to march. We heard that there had been a severe fight on the river, and we were to go as fast as we could. We marched all night, going right through a considerable stream, and presently it began to rain, and toward morning, as we were pegging along, we came across various men coming back, who said that we had had a terrible beating. This was the battle of Ball's Bluff. We reached the bank of the river, and there were various men in the houses thereabouts, and troops lying pretty near to the point we reached; and we then learned how our men had gone across the river, had been attacked and driven back, and how much harm had been done. All this time it was raining as hard as it well could, and we were wet through. I heard that a canal boat was going down the river, and that various men whom I knew were on board. I ran down and found Caspar Crowninshield on the stern of the canal boat in a pair of drawers and an overcoat. He gave me a hand, and I got up on the boat, heard his story, saw Willy Putnam and various others lying down below. Willy Putnam had been shot in the stomach and could hardly speak, and there were various other men badly wounded.

William Lowell Putnam's wound proved mortal. He was one of the three nephews whom James Russell Lowell was to immortalize in the "Biglow Papers." Higginson had seen much of him in those happy spring days at Florence in 1857. Putnam's cousin, Lieutenant James Jackson Lowell, and Lieutenant O. W. Holmes, Jr., were among the wounded; Colonel W. R. Lee and Lieutenant C. L. Bartlett and many another friend of Higginson escaped unhurt. The Germans whom he had drilled in South Boston were mainly in Company C, which was shot to pieces.<sup>1</sup>

On October 31, ten days after the battle, Higginson and

<sup>1</sup> The best detailed account of the battle of Ball's Bluff is in George A. Bruce's *Twentieth Regiment Massachusetts Volunteers*, Boston, 1906.

Greely Curtis received their commissions in the First Massachusetts Cavalry, and resigned from the Second Regiment. It was about to go into winter quarters, and they saw no chance of active service for many months. It also appears from Henry's letters to his father that his relations with Colonel Gordon were not cordial, and he was glad of the change. So the Second went on without him, to Cedar Mountain and Antietam, to Chancellorsville and Gettysburg, and in Sherman's march to the sea. Major Curtis and Captain Higginson drove over to the camp of the Twentieth Massachusetts to say good-bye, and then took a wagon for Washington, on their way back to Boston, where their new regiment was to be mustered in. Higginson's Civil War Reminiscences continue the story:—

I had been feeling very queer for three or four days, and by the time I got to Washington did not very well know what I was doing. Apparently I had a very bad cold and was feverish. The next day we took a train for New York, and reached there about midnight, when we went to the Astor House, and there again I felt wretched. The next day we again took the train for Boston, and I probably slept most of the time. When I arrived in Boston, Greely Curtis had disappeared, he having been left on the way by some accident. I got a carriage and drove to Wendell Holmes's house, told them of his son and that he was doing pretty well, drove to Greely Curtis's house and told them that he was on the way, and would be there pretty soon, and then drove to my father's house, where I turned up at ten o'clock or so at night. I had a longing for a drink of lemonade, and this longing had lasted forty-eight hours, and I had not got it. My father looked at me, and in fifteen minutes appeared with Doctor Ware, who told me to go to bed. My nose had been bleeding a good deal, and continued to bleed, and the next day they found that I had typhoid fever, which kept me fast for a good many weeks.

Typhoid fever was not an inspiring close of the first phase of Higginson's military life, nor was it a good omen for his campaign of 1862 as a cavalryman. But late in December he had strength enough to join his new comrades in their muddy, freezing, desolate camp at Readville.

It must be remembered that in April, 1861, the Federal army had only five regular regiments of cavalry, to which a sixth was then added. Militia cavalry companies soon volunteered, but throughout 1861 the superiority of the Confederate cavalry was manifest, and this superiority was easily maintained during 1862. By the summer of 1863, a measure of equality was at last obtained by the North, and in 1864 and 1865 the Confederate cavalry, in spite of brilliant leadership, was inferior in numbers and equipment.<sup>1</sup> But in 1862 the North was only beginning to learn its lesson. There was no cavalry bureau at Washington, no general in command over that branch of the service, and no Federal officer of high rank in the field seemed to understand the proper use of mounted troops. They were wasted and demoralized, frittered away in random futilities. The organization and record of the First Massachusetts Cavalry illustrate the amateurishness of method and the squandering of splendid material which crippled the Northern cavalry until the essential lessons had been learned. Henry Higginson's experience was fairly typical.

Governor Andrew of Massachusetts had determined, in September, 1861, to raise a cavalry regiment. Plenty of men from various Dragoons, Lancers, and Horse-Guards organizations were ready to enlist. The Governor secured as colonel a Virginian in the United States Army, Robert Williams, a graduate of West Point, who had distinguished himself there as an instructor of cavalry. He was an admirable disciplinarian and organizer. But according to Charles Francis Adams, who served under him and proposes to "deal kindly with him,"

<sup>1</sup> This matter is fully discussed in chapter I of the *History of the First Regiment of Massachusetts Cavalry*, by B. W. Crowninshield, Boston, 1891.

— an ominous phrase, — “he was all-outside. There was no real stuff in him. . . . As an officer, in presence of the enemy or under the stress of campaign, Williams was an utter failure; and so recognized.”<sup>1</sup>

As lieutenant-colonel, the Governor appointed a member of his own staff, Horace Binney Sargent, first scholar in the Harvard class of 1843, and a graduate of the Law School. He looked well on horseback. His brother, Lucius Manlius Sargent, Jr., was successively captain, major and lieutenant-colonel in the regiment, and fell gallantly in action in December, 1864. Both brothers were brave and energetic, but without military training, or the gift for handling men.<sup>2</sup>

That autumn was unusually cold and wet, and it took all the experience of Colonel Williams and the enthusiasm of Lieutenant-Colonel Sargent to organize the Readville camp into anything like discipline. Many horses were sick, and the men were untrained in caring for them. Mounted drill began about December 1, but there was no issue of horse-equipments until December 15. The regiment paraded in Boston four days later, but it was too cold for pomp and circumstance. Henry Higginson, just out of bed, had been assigned to Company A, as senior captain of the regiment. He says of his company: —

They were a remarkably tough set of men of all sorts of occupations, among them prize-fighters, barkeepers and the like, and also some very good men. They had had as their first captain a barkeeper, who could do nothing with them, and he was dismissed and I was put in charge. . . . I had to ride and look after my men, do the regular guard-duty, drill, etc., and I knew nothing about it and had to learn as I went.

<sup>1</sup> Charles Francis Adams, *An Autobiography* (Boston, 1916), p. 138.

<sup>2</sup> See John T. Morse's *Memoir of Henry Lee* (Boston, 1905), p. 165, and C. F. Adams, *Autobiography*, p. 146. It would be needless to allude to the ancient bitternesses in the regiment, if they were not essential to an understanding of the real situation of Henry Higginson and his brother officers in the coming campaigns.

It was a comfort to him that Greely Curtis, his boyhood friend and comrade in the Second Infantry, was now major of the First Cavalry. Among his fellow captains were Caspar Crowninshield, who had distinguished himself at Ball's Bluff, T. L. Motley, L. M. Sargent, Jr., and S. E. Chamberlain, a former fireman in Cambridge, who rose later to be colonel of the regiment. Charles F. Adams, B. W. Crowninshield, and Pelham Curtis were first lieutenants, and among the second lieutenants were H. P. Bowditch, Nathaniel Bowditch, George Blagden, Louis Cabot, W. H. Forbes, Channing Clapp, and Arnold Rand. A "Harvard crowd," unmistakably, and their subsequent record proved that, whatever Colonel Williams's own defects as a fighter might be, he had a keen eye for picking good officer material.

On Christmas Day the First Battalion, Companies A, B, C, and D, under Major Curtis, left Readville for Annapolis, Maryland, expecting to join Burnside's expedition to North Carolina. But the War Department changed its plans; and after a few weeks of drill at Annapolis the First Battalion joined the second and third as a part of General Hunter's Expeditionary Corps. Hunter had captured the forts at Hilton Head, South Carolina, had taken possession of Beaufort and a small territory on the sea-islands, and now threatened Savannah and Charleston, in case Fort Pulaski should fall.

Exactly how useful cavalry might prove on Beaufort Island, no one seemed to know. In case of a real invasion of South Carolina, they could be used. So down the cavalry sailed, on improvised transports, and went into camp at Beaufort and Hilton Head. They found plenty of roses, jasmine, and blackberries, even in February, also mosquitoes, sand-flies, and fleas, but no fighting. The weather was fine and they drilled diligently. Captain Higginson writes to his father in March:—

I was ignorant as a baby of horses when I joined the regiment at Readville, and yet knew that I must take great care

of my company horses as my means of making my men efficient. Now I know very little of horses, but I have succeeded in making my men work at them in every way until they look tolerably well. . . . I find great and continual pleasure in this occupation, and foresee the same for a long time. Infantry drill once learned is monotonous, but riding is a lasting excitement and delight.

The captain's letters home, during that spring, are the happiest that he wrote in war-time. He was doing his work well, and knew it, and Colonel Williams, who at this time had the regiment well in hand, selected him for promotion. His commission as major dated from March 26. He wrote to his father on April 12: "I am very much pleased to receive promotion in our regiment, and all the more because I did not expect it. Three other captains had, as I thought, a better chance than I." The new major wrote gayly to his sister Mary:—

BEAUFORT, S.C., May 20, 1862.

DEAR LITTLE MOLLY:—

What do you want to know about our camp? One camp is very like another, the difference being that with us cavalry folks a long rope is stretched down the company street, to which the horses are tied. We keep very tidy and clean, strike (that is take down) the tents three times a week, send the men to bathe as often, take all the bedding, etc., out of the tents every fair day, and in short do everything we can to keep healthy. We have lost two men by death since September, the regiment next us *sixty*. They are pigs. If we never see a fight, we all have nevertheless learned to care for and manage men: you'd be surprised to find how little our intelligent Yankees know of caring for their own health. They eat and drink all sorts of things.

Last week, as you know, I sent my mare home; she'll do nicely at Lenox and will take you over the ground a little

faster than you ever went with horseflesh. But she is not the kind of beast for me. My new horse came to me Saturday, and is a beauty. We don't like to trot here, you know, but do like to canter. The mare can trot very well and very fast, but she gets into a great fret if another horse comes near her, and then she will break into a gallop and run like a wild-cat. This new horse and my other (taken from the regiment) canter and gallop well and trot also if I like; they are quiet-tempered and yet full of life. You see, Molly, there is quite enough to do even on drill without having a horse wild with excitement to bother one; and when we come to actual service, it will be essential to have one's horse well in hand. My new horse comes from an officer in a Rhode Island regiment, — who has more than he wants, — and is part Arabian. If we ever get home with our nags, you shall have the jolliest ride in the world on him. My big horse, popularly known as "Rats-in-a-barrel," and called for short "Rats," is an excellent work-horse, handy, light, strong and ugly; he can run fast for a short distance. Saturday we are going to have a very short race, all of us officers here: I'll tell you who wins, if the steamer does not go till then; but I hope to be in first, for "Rats" starts very quickly indeed.

You can't imagine how big I feel now that I've a camp under me. A year ago this time I was learning guard-duty and squad-drill on foot; now I ride around on a big horse, have *two* rows of brass buttons on my coat (you should have seen the men look last night at parade, as I wore the new coat for the first time), preside at parade, go to see the general commanding our brigade, and am generally just as big as I can swell. There is one thing about it: I don't swear so much as when I had to do directly with the men. I've a real pretty cap and beautiful boots and spurs, and so, with my new coat, it is quite a pity that my picture should n't be taken. My hair and beard are as short as scissors can cut them, which adds to the beautiful effect. . . .

Give my love to father and the other children; Jim will be at home one of these days, but not in time enough for the war. I'm afraid that our regiment will never see a fight. Where are you going this summer? We've had bushels of blackberries etc. for several weeks, and to-day have very hot weather: we do nothing from 9 o'clk A.M. to 3 P.M.; our mounted drill-hour is from 6 to 8 A.M. Good-bye, little girl: be good and you'll be happy.

H.

It will be noted that the Major's love for horses developed rapidly. It was to become a lifelong passion. His war letters are full of the exploits of his favorite horses: "Rats," "Piggy," "Nutmeg," and a bigger horse named "Grater." Like all cavalry officers of this period, in both armies, he was greatly worried over the difficulty of securing suitable remounts. Each officer in 1862 had to buy his own horses, and the faithful George Higginson is kept busy looking at "Howland Shaw's mare," at "that mare in Haverhill," and a dozen more, that might perhaps be bought reasonably and shipped South.

In the meantime General Hunter's artillery had opened upon Fort Pulaski. "They began yesterday morning [April 10] upon Fort Pulaski (the fort is on the Savannah River and is very strong), and have been firing away most of the time since, as if Hell had broken loose. Everyone here has gone to see the fun, among others, Greely and Captain Chamberlain of ours." The fort fell on the next day, but it was several weeks before the invasion of the mainland was attempted, and it proved to be a failure. Eight companies of the First Cavalry joined in the attack on Charleston, early in June, but Major Higginson, with two companies, was left behind at Beaufort — "the cussedest luck." In the James Island fight, a few days later, C. F. Adams was under fire for the first time, and "never passed a more pleasurable morning in my life. The excitement of a battlefield is grand." But again there was no such luck for the companies under Major Higginson's command.

His account of a young rebel prisoner is too characteristic to be omitted:—

I went to see a rebel prisoner wounded and taken in our fight the other day. He begged for his life, when we came up at the bridge, and was astonished at our kind treatment — only another proof of the lies so industriously circulated at the South of our barbarity. But I was surprised to see the little fellow this morning — young and small, with beautiful fair hair thrown back from his forehead which was high and fine, a delicately cut nose and a sweet expression about his mouth. He spoke only a few words and with pain, but those few betrayed that he was of gentle blood and well-bred. He is but seventeen years of age, and took his father's place against the will of his mother, as his father was drafted. The negroes here say he is a Barnwell, and he bears a resemblance, I think, to one of that family in college with me. The poor boy has a severe wound, but will recover, so the doctor thinks. I took a great fancy to him, and should much like to send his mother tidings of him. He gives his name as Hughes.

June crept by, and there was news of Banks's retreat to the Potomac, and of the gallant rear-guard fighting of the Second Massachusetts. "I see that my old Company D suffered much. It is too bad. If we had been there, we might have saved many a good fellow." James Savage had distinguished himself, and Higginson thinks he should be made a major. The promotion came, in fact, before this letter reached Boston.

June turned to July, and the weather grew fiercely hot. Higginson kept "hearty as a bull," he writes, but his weight of 175 pounds was soon reduced to 155, and many of his fellow officers broke down. There was bad news from Virginia. "Poor Jimmy Lowell," Higginson writes on July 23, "or rather poor Cousin Anna, for Jimmy is well enough off."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Lieutenant James Jackson Lowell, younger brother of Charles Russell Lowell,

Week by week it became only too apparent that the regiment was wasted in South Carolina.

We are useless here, and might be useful at the North. . . . Can no one get us moved North? Ask Mr. Forbes if he can't start us. . . . I do think that the horizon looks very stormy. I hope the opinion that we shall not get back our lost states is gaining ground, in order to save future disappointment. If we can clean out Virginia, Kentucky, and Tennessee, and keep the Mississippi, including all west of it, for ourselves, we shall do well enough. The Gulf states, once shut in thus, will decay, and will in time come again into our hands. But this war has been most shamefully managed in some respects. Halleck will, it is to be hoped, concentrate all the troops, including the 12,000 to 15,000 useless men in this Department, and will thus sweep Virginia clean. If he does not, God help the land.

This was written to his father on August 10, and on that same day Henry wrote to his brother Jim, who was still lingering in Germany — though drilling there and trying to get a commission at Boston: —

. . . I remember full well that I never wanted anyone's opinion as to my return and that I bided my time with perfect composure. For just that reason I've not urged your return, but now I will say that you may not comprehend fully the facts of our position as a nation. We have made the greatest army in the world, we have made great exertions, we have offered money freely, we have waited in all patience for victory and

had fallen at Glendale, near Richmond, crying: "Don't mind me, men: go forward." He was born at Elmwood, — the home of his uncle James Russell Lowell in Cambridge, — and like Charles Lowell, had led his class at Harvard. He had been wounded at Ball's Bluff, where his cousin, William Lowell Putnam, had been killed. There are touching lines about him by James Russell Lowell (*Biglow Papers*, Second Series, No. X), and he is one of the six dear friends of Major Higginson commemorated by the monument on Soldiers Field.

deliverance — and we have been divided by our own leaders, *thrashed, aye thrashed*, and now we are struggling for our existence. Our hope lies in reinforcements and then in unity of action; if Halleck and McClellan cannot manage that, we shall go to the devil. You cannot gather from the papers nor from letters the full import of the thing, and of course cannot feel the matter as we living in the midst of it do. Everyone at home is straining to help the cause, almost everyone going to the war who can go — drafting ought to commence at once. Now, Jimmy, you will feel very sorry if you have no hand in the struggle — whether we sink or swim. We are fighting against slavery, present or future, and we are struggling for the right of mankind to be educated and to think; come and do your part. Of your father's children I am the only one bearing arms; I know that I was placed exactly right for the emergency and that no one of the rest of you was so: that I went because I could n't stay at home, and have enjoyed myself highly since; that for a hundred reasons it was no sacrifice, but an enormous gratification and pleasure, and to me, as education, as experience, as occupation, as good pay for my otherwise idle time. I do not take an atom of credit to myself, but I do think that the family quota should be stronger. . . . I want you and Frank to learn all that you can in the army, and to have the satisfaction of feeling that you were doing your part. . . . Charley Lowell is on McClellan's staff, and will do something there. Jimmy L. is dead, poor fellow. We are burning here on the sand, and are of no use to anyone — thermometer at 111 degrees in the shade (to-day 120 in the shade). I am hearty and strong, tho' pretty thin. We are praying to go North. . . .

P.S. Aug. 14. — We are just ordered North, for which, thank God! Another call for 300,000 men, making in all 600,000 called for this summer, has come and they're going to draft. Now we'll thrash 'em.

When these letters were written, Higginson was ignorant of what had befallen his comrades of the Second Massachusetts

on the previous day, August 9, at Cedar Mountain. Stonewall Jackson had cut Banks's corps to pieces. The Second Massachusetts, fighting heroically, had had to fall back. Of its twenty-two officers in action, only eight escaped unhurt. Thirty-five per cent of the regiment were killed or wounded. Captains Abbott, Cary, Goodwin and Williams, with Lieutenant Stephen Perkins, were killed. Major James Savage, mortally wounded, was a prisoner, as were also Captain Henry S. Russell, — who had stayed to help Major Savage, — Captain Quincy and Lieutenant Miller. Robert G. Shaw, serving as aid to General Gordon, was untouched. Halleck telegraphed from Washington to Major-General Pope: "I congratulate you and your army, and particularly General Banks and his corps, on your hard-earned and brilliant success against vastly superior numbers." But this was only military rhetoric. Cedar Mountain was a stupid, useless sacrifice of brave men, and it cost Major Higginson two of his most intimate friends. The memory of James Savage and Stephen Perkins haunted him throughout his long life; he never wearied of talking and writing of them, and the tragedy of their deaths, ennobled by time and the ultimate triumph of their cause, affected profoundly, as we shall see, the whole current of his beneficent idealism.

Both James Savage and Stephen Perkins had "finished in style," to use Kipling's phrase. "It was splendid," wrote Robert Gould Shaw, who was to "finish in style" himself at Fort Wagner less than a year later, "to see those sick fellows walk straight up into the shower of bullets as if it were so much rain; men who, until this year, had lived lives of perfect ease and luxury." Perkins died instantly, pierced by three bullets.<sup>1</sup> Savage had an arm and a leg shattered, and was carried as a prisoner to Charlottesville, where he was tenderly cared for by the family of his brother-in-law, Professor W. B. Rogers. But

<sup>1</sup> He had written to Higginson when a mere boy, "I wonder whether we shall go on constantly expecting life to unfold itself, and the great possibilities to appear in us and outside of us, until we are surprised that death has come for us, when we hardly seem to ourselves to have lived."

his wounds were mortal. "Of all the officers I ever saw," said a private soldier, "Major Savage was the noblest Christian gentleman." And Charles Adams, when the first rumors of the disaster at Cedar Mountain reached Hilton Head, wrote in his diary: "Stephen Perkins is reported dead . . . the ablest man I ever knew, the finest mind I ever met."<sup>1</sup>

Weeks went by before Higginson could bring himself to believe the bad news. He wrote to his father from the ship *Planter* on Sunday, August 24:—

Here we are lying in Hampton Roads with a rousing north-easter 'singing thro' our rigging. We got here yesterday at three o'clock P.M. after a very favorable and pleasant voyage, and found everything heels over head, officers, soldiers, sailors, teamsters, niggers, mules, horses, wagons, steamers, ordnance of all kinds hastening in every direction. We ought to have run up the bay and up the Potomac to Acquia Creek, whither we are going, last night. We tried to start this morning, but it blew too hard for the steamer to hold us. I went ashore to get some orders; two of the sailors in the boat ran off, so another officer and myself took oars and tugged away. But it was useless with so tremendous a wind and sea; so we got hold of a tug laden with soldiers and were at last taken out to our ship. The tug had to tow us thro' this smashing sea, and bring us round thro' the trough of the sea without swamping the boat. She did it, God knows how, but it was a job to get aboard the ship; and we were well ducked. I've four companies with me, and three more have run up the river in the McClellan and Ericsson with the colonel. Greely is coming very soon with some more companies. Thank God that we are out of South Carolina!

We heard before starting of Banks's last battle, and of the dreadful losses there sustained. We have not yet received

<sup>1</sup> Admirable sketches of Perkins and Savage will be found in the *Harvard Memorial Biographies*.

authentic accounts of the fight, and cannot believe in the loss of our friends. . . .

They are on their last legs at the South. Certain it is that neither they nor we can bear this tremendous strain much longer. . . . I'm ready to fight ten years, but the country can't and won't stand it. We have got North soon enough for the great fight of the war, thank God Almighty — and we'll try to show our stuff.

But it was nearly two weeks after leaving Hilton Head that the Planter came to anchor at Acquia Creek, in the Potomac, near Fredericksburg. The Major writes on September 2:—

We were out yesterday and the day before on picket duty, covering Gen. Burnside's retreat. . . . Heaven only knows the position of affairs here; we hear all sorts of stories, but I fancy we are not doing brilliantly. . . . I shall buy no more horses, for Uncle Sam will furnish a beast at \$8 a month. . . . I was horrified to hear the truth about the 2nd Mass. Poor Stephen! and Dick Cary's wife.<sup>1</sup> But we live so fast that one can't think of one battle more than a day.

Five days later he writes from Rockville, Maryland: "We have nearly done this war; the enemy is here in Maryland in great force, and we are thrashed." This was just after Pope had been defeated in the second battle of Bull Run, and just before Antietam.

Higginson's fragmentary Reminiscences of the Civil War — dictated long afterwards — give some vivid glimpses of men and military movements in that confused period. It is not a military historian who is writing, but an old man who recalls what most impressed him at the time. It is the method of Tolstoy's "War and Peace" and of Stephen Crane's "Red Badge of Courage."

<sup>1</sup> Captain Richard Cary was the brother of Mrs. Louis Agassiz.

Just then the army was falling back during the second Bull Run campaign, and we could hear the fighting going on day after day. General Burnside was at Falmouth in command, and very soon we were ordered north to Alexandria, and then through Washington into Maryland. The army was in the greatest confusion; Pope had been badly beaten, and, just as we reached Alexandria, everybody was streaming into that town, and nobody knew where anybody was. I passed the night riding through Alexandria to find our own men, part of whom had gone into one boat and part in another. As the colonel was away and the lieutenant-colonel was ill at the north and the senior major had been left in South Carolina, I was in command. I received orders in the middle of the night to picket the river from ten miles north of Washington to Harper's Ferry or some point near that. I got these orders at about one o'clock, and had no provisions and no cooking-kits. I managed to get these during the night, and towards daylight found my men, and we marched through Washington. There I ran across Charles Lowell, who told me that General McClellan had taken command the night before, and that things were being gotten in good order. We reached Georgetown, passed the night there, and then marched north, Colonel Williams having turned up from Baltimore and taken command of the regiment. When we got near Poolesville we were encamped, and a large body of cavalry under General Pleasonton came up. Some of our own regiment had been sent to Poolesville and had a little skirmish there, the Confederate cavalry being in charge of that place. We lost a few men, but it did not amount to anything.

Then the whole army gradually marched north to Frederick. We used to see two or three columns abreast marching across the fields, in the roads, etc., and we came across many friends. One day we saw the Second Massachusetts Infantry, which we had served with before, and heard something of the terrible disaster which had befallen that regiment at Cedar Mountain,

where many of the men and best officers were killed, and the regiment sacrificed by the stupidity of General Banks.

We saw the 20th regiment too, and many other old comrades. One of these days we stopped for the noon halt in a pleasant field, and I noticed a large camp of general officers nearby. Asking, I found that it was General McClellan's headquarters; therefore, I went there to inquire for Charles Lowell, who was on his staff. I found him and we lay on the grass discussing all manner of things until it was time to start. He told me that he liked the general very much; that he was a great strategist, but not so decisive in action as he should be. He said that he was like the Duke of Wellington in that he got everything ready, and then unlike the Duke of Wellington in that he did not strike resolutely and as hard as possible. He said that he was too good-natured and too considerate of his subordinates. He thought that our campaign would be successful, but might be marred by this irresolution of the general.

That night we rode into Frederick City, found it in great confusion, and at last passed through the city and found quarters in a big pasture. The next morning we started again, and soon came to the mountains beyond Frederick City, and all of a sudden came across some of the enemy. One of our batteries was brought quickly to the front and went into action, and we were ordered to support it, the enemy firing at us also; but the enemy's battery was quickly withdrawn, and we pushed on a little way. There was hardly a skirmish, and presently we came to the hills looking toward South Mountain. There I was put to the foremost post, with a couple of guns and a squadron or two of cavalry, and we went to bed supperless. We had no rations, nor had we received any for some days, and had picked up what we could in the country. We could not light any fire because we were watched by the enemy, who had batteries opposite us, and we knew that the Confederate army was on the South Mountain and looking towards us. There was no attack at night, although we rather expected it.

After a night of careful watching the day came, and the army began to move up. Several general officers came to the hill on which I passed the night, and took observations about the Confederate line. Then the infantry and artillery came along in very good spirits, which surprised me greatly, for the army had had such a terrible beating before Washington that I supposed that it would feel downcast — nothing of the kind! Our men advanced on various spots, and drove the Confederates back. There was a good deal of sharp fighting, chiefly infantry, although artillery had its share. We had no chance whatsoever; we started up the great road at the South Mountain, but the artillery raked the road, and so we were ordered off without injury to the regiment, and we supported a gun or two which was firing at the enemy. They passed, we driving the enemy clean out of the Mountain, and we were taken over to the right of our line, where we passed the night picketing and watching the roads. There we got a little meal from a stable, and I made some cakes and baked them on hot stones.

Presently we were ordered to move up, and rode up the road and over the South Mountain and down the other side, seeing some remnants of the army. Just at the foot of the mountain we saw signs of a skirmish with some Confederate cavalry, but it did not amount to anything.

We went on about on the lead, and presently came to a ridge where, looking across, we saw the Confederate army posted. Our men were pouring up the various roads and coming across the fields in good order, and by night a large number of them had arrived. General McClellan came up at about six o'clock and was received with loud cheers by the men all along the road. We were encamped a little way back in the position which we had taken, and were wondering what we should do for supper. We had not had a regular meal for a week or ten days. The next morning the colonel ordered me to go and find two pigs, which I did. I took with me two men, who shot the pigs, whereupon I was called to order by a little captain, who

rose up in the orchard where the pigs had been feeding. He forbade my taking the pigs, but when he saw that I outranked him, he said no more. We took the pigs back to camp, and they were dressed, and the men ate them. As they had no salt and almost no bread, it made them very sick.

The South Mountain fight had been Sunday; we had come up Monday, September 15, and this was Tuesday of which I speak. At about eight o'clock William Sedgwick came to see us and took Pelham Curtis and me to his camp for breakfast, and gave us some bread and butter, and I remember crying, I was so hungry.

The army was all up and in line, and in the afternoon there was a very sharp fight on our right, General Hooker getting in chiefly and being rather beaten back. Meanwhile General Burnside had come on our left. The next morning the fight began in earnest, and we had the battle of Antietam. We were taken to the rear to get us out of the way, and presently brought up at the middle point of our line on the Chesapeake Road, with batteries before us and batteries behind us, and the artillery fire was very heavy. A few shot came down among us, but did no harm. We stayed there two or three hours, until at last we were withdrawn and put behind the bank of Antietam Creek, where we could not be hurt, and thus our chance was lost.<sup>1</sup> We might have been taken up the main road and done a good deal of mischief. The battle went on, and night came, and nobody knew just what the result had been. We know now that, if Burnside had moved promptly, as he was ordered to, at 8 o'clock, we should have surrounded Lee's army and taken the whole army prisoners, for we could have easily shut it off from Shepard's Ford, over which fresh troops came and strengthened it.

The next day we expected to renew the fight, and on moving forward found that Lee's army had gone across the river in the night. I picked up an old letter or two, which I have some-

<sup>1</sup> It was here that C. F. Adams "dropped quietly asleep." *Autobiography*, p. 153.

where, and which show the spirit of the Confederate troops. It was very good indeed.

Presently a part of the army was pushed forward toward the river, and a few troops thrown across the river; but the enemy came down, and our troops were withdrawn. We went to the bank of the river, and were just going in when we were pushed back. There was really nothing to be accomplished. Then we went into camp, and the army began to get itself in order again. In our regiment we took occasion to get clean clothes by washing those we had. I had seen no baggage since Alexandria, and I had not changed my underclothes for six weeks; so I took everything off, except my trousers and over-coat, it being hot weather, and gave them to my striker to be washed. Greely Curtis and I, with one or two others, took a bath in one of the small streams, and then, in this costume, we rode over to see Bill Sedgwick, who had been wounded, and who was lying in a house to the rear two or three miles. We found him very contented and jolly, and we knew, as he did, that he must die in twenty-four or forty-eight hours. He was absolutely paralyzed below the waist, and there was no help for him. We had half an hour with him, and then went back to the regiment.

A letter to his father from Sharpsburg (Antietam) on September 18 is concise enough:—

We had a great fight yesterday and rather beat them, tho' nothing is yet decided. Old Sumner got his hat shot off and put things right thro' on the right wing. He is a buster. Gen'l Sedgwick hit in two places, not dangerously. Wilder Dwight mortally wounded; Bill — probably killed; Palfrey shot thro' the chest; Paul Revere slightly wounded; Hooker, Mansfield, Richardson and others high in rank more or less wounded. Wendell Holmes slightly hurt; Hallowell lost an arm.<sup>1</sup> Charlie

<sup>1</sup> Hallowell did not lose an arm, though he was severely wounded.

all right, but a horse shot under him. I see Charlie every day now. . . .

I congratulate you on your birthday, daddy.

We are getting reinforcements and shall fight again. The whole rebel army is here in front of us. I think we'll thrash them here for good and all.

A week later he summarizes Antietam in two sentences: "It came very near being a tremendous victory for us and also equally near being a defeat. If Burnside had done at all what was expected of him, we should have cut off their retreat utterly."<sup>1</sup>

Yet the year closed gloomily. The regiment went into camp at Acquia Creek and then at Falmouth near Fredericksburg. The internal troubles increased. Colonel Williams resigned to enter the Adjutant-General's office at Washington, where he did excellent service, and rose to be Adjutant-General himself. He was succeeded by Colonel Sargent. "We learned nothing," says C. F. Adams, "unless it were to carry insubordination to a fine art. . . . Regimental quarrels were incessant." Frank Higginson was eager to enter the service, and Jim was landing from his long sojourn in Germany; but Henry, because of the regimental quarrels, did not wish either of his brothers in the First Cavalry. In some moods indeed, in that dispiriting autumn, Henry wished that Jim would keep out of the army altogether, and help in some other way. But Jim wanted to fight, as the following letter shows.

BOSTON, Oct. 9, 1862.

DEAR HENRY, —

We have been hoping for some days to hear from you again — and I especially, because I thought you might give me some

<sup>1</sup> "To overcome Lee in any way and on any terms was matter for congratulation. . . . The state of feeling at the North had changed from despondency before South Mountain to positive buoyancy after Antietam." J. F. Rhodes, *History of the Civil War* (N.Y., 1917), p. 170.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE CIVIL WAR: SECOND PHASE

Year that trembled and reel'd beneath me!  
Your summer wind was warm enough, yet the air I breathed froze me,  
A thick gloom fell through the sunshine and darken'd me,  
Must I change my triumphant songs? said I to myself,  
Must I indeed learn to chant the cold dirges of the baffled?  
And sullen hymns of defeat?

—WALT WHITMAN: *Drum-Taps*.

AT first there was little change. On January 11, 1863, he writes: —

We are fiddling around the country as usual, this day after Stuart, the next after Hampton; all in vain. I may soon tell you of a brilliant plan which would have eclipsed any of the cavalry movements in this country. I was on court-martial when Greely told me a bit of a plan, for which details of 100 picked men and horses from six or eight regiments of cavalry had been made. He had been taken from our regiment. I immediately went to our General Averell and applied for leave to accompany them, to which he — contrary to usual rules — consented. I returned to camp and got ready. . . . It was a risky expedition, but a buster. All went swimmingly and we were thirty miles from camp, December 31, when an order from Halleck, came, stopping us; oh, such a pity! Everybody was in such spirits; a splendid command of cavalry; a battery finely officered, and furnished with fresh horses from General Burnside's own wagons. We could and would have done anything. Such checks destroy the enthusiasm of any army.

On January 3: "Nothing new except the changes of generals. We are getting on to perdition. . . . If the people



H. L. HIGGINSON, MAJOR OF CAVALRY, U.S. ARMY (1863)

mp

at home do not take the mismanagement of this war and this government to heart, we shall have a disgraceful peace before summer."

But the next day his spirits seem to have risen, for he writes his sister that he is thinking of becoming a professional soldier of fortune: ". . . I mean to go to Mexico and fight the French after this war is done. It might be a pleasant life, and it would certainly be good fun to cut off those little red-legged sinners, who have been swelling about their fighting and victory. After that I shall return and enter some European service, perhaps that of 'La Belle France,' or of Austria. . . ."

Probably this was only a "Higgism," intended for Molly's amusement, but at any rate it indicates a more cheerful mood. Before the end of the month the regimental troubles culminated in a "very lively storm" which "purified the air."<sup>1</sup> Higginson, Curtis, and Adams stood together in this matter, and Higginson's outspoken courage won Adams's lifelong gratitude. Discipline was restored, and the Major's spirits rose. By February he is begging his father to "tell Frank to seek a commission with Bob Shaw in his black regiment." This is his first reference to the famous Massachusetts Fifty-Fourth.

Major Higginson was now responsible for a picket line about ten miles in length, lying some eighty miles from the regiment's winter camp at Falmouth. He rode along the whole line daily, and often at night. But there were few alarms — the only real attack, which was easily repulsed, happening to come during the few days when Higginson had returned to Boston on a furlough. He had a happy time at Chauncy Street.<sup>2</sup> He had a gay evening in Washington on his way back to Virginia, and describes it in this letter to Molly: —

<sup>1</sup> See *A Cycle of Adams Letters* (Boston, 1920), vol. I, pp. 248, 249.

<sup>2</sup> Mrs. Higginson writes of this furlough: "I remember especially a party at Papanti's, a dinner at Mrs. Putnam's (mother of Lieutenant Putnam, who was killed at Ball's Bluff), and a party at Dr. Hooper's, where all sadness and anxiety was for the moment kept in the background."

In Washington I saw Cousin Anna and Annie, and dined at the Hoopers', seeing the three younger ladies as well as Mrs. Hooper and Mary Motley (who is very pleasant and gentle), Professors Agassiz and Bache, Mr. Boutwell of our state, and *Secretary Chase*. About this last gentleman I have felt much curiosity — and quite like him. He is bright-minded, and is a gentleman for the most part. He and Prof. A. were funny. Mr. Chase *would call* me colonel, so I, in return, admired him. In the evening I went to his reception, and saw his daughter, the prettiest woman in Washington, I hear — very pretty too — beautiful eyes and eyelashes, complexion, expression, graceful, good manners, good mouth — altogether quite charming. Nelly Hooper lent me a pair of gloves, which I shall keep as a memento of my pleasant dinner and evening and of my beautiful hand. I put the gloves on, that is I got two fingers inside one of them. Meantime I owe her a pair of gloves, as I asked for these. But I had a very nice talk with Nelly and Annie Hooper. I found Molly Motley had my cross-eyed photograph. I expect the last one will prove a success — with my pretty cap and eyes turned to Heaven. Write me how it is. I found that Thayer (*life of Beethoven*) was in Washington, and Jim has written to bring him hither. . . .

He came back full of energy. "Not having quite enough to do, I asked the general commanding our division if I might help to drill a New York regiment [the Fourth New York Cavalry] which was under the command of Colonel Cesnola, and which had really no manners or customs."

One March day, on picket duty, he penciled in a beautiful clear hand the following letter to his old friend A. W. Thayer, whom he had just missed in Washington. Thayer had been Mr. Motley's secretary in Vienna, and served for thirty years as United States Consul at Trieste. It is a most significant letter, and shows that the black and bitter mood had passed.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This letter has kindly been placed at my disposal by Mrs. Jabez Fox.

ON PICKET — *March 15, 1863.***DEAR THAYER:** —

When you were in Washington, I passed thro', and was astonished to hear at the Sanitary rooms of "Thayer," "Vienna Thayer," the "Great Thayer." I tried twice in my short stay of a few hours to see you — in vain. If you could have come here, you should have seen something of our army, and should have delighted our eyes with your presence and our ears with tales of your own doings, of friends in Europe and of music in all its forms. But you must hurry back to Vienna, my second and well-beloved home. Well, old fellow, go your own way and work out your own salvation. I am trying to work out mine, so is Jim, and so is many a good, brave man. The many little salvations will go to make that of our country and of the human race. Tell me there is no American people, is no nationality, is no distinct and strong love of country! It is a lie, and those who have said it to me in Europe simply were ignorant! We've been to school for two years *all the time*, and have been learning a lesson — wait and see if we don't know it and use it pretty soon. We'll beat these men, fighting for slavery and for wickedness, out of house and home, beat them to death, this summer too. I do not say this to boast, but as my belief and my intention, so far as I am concerned. We are right, and are trying hard; we have at last real soldiers, not recruits, in the field, and we shall reap our harvest. Only people at home must support us, and must cheer us on, as they now again, after their apathy, are doing. I cannot, for the life of me, see any other possible way for us than to whip them: we have no ground on which to make peace — and cannot have any, until we or they have given in — beaten. Peace cannot last if made now. Besides, this is all we can do for mankind. I, for one, have felt merely delight from the beginning of the war, that the day had come, which was to make me a soldier fighting for freedom for man, for the right and the good, for God. My whole religion (that is my whole belief and hope in everything, in life

in man, in woman, in music, in good, in the beautiful, in the real truth) rests on the questions now really before us. It is enough to keep up one's pluck, is n't it, old fellow?

And I'm still young enough to go much farther and fare much worse than I have, for one warm look and one kind word from a maiden. Does one ever lose the real love and enthusiasm for women who are good and pure and high-minded? I do not think it: at least the decay has not yet begun with me. The little week at home brightened and cheered me very much: and it was a real delight to find that one's place was kept and a warm welcome ready for the wanderer, for the soldier. And so it goes: all in a lifetime. Thank God that we were born in these days!

When you go back to dear old Vienna, Thayer, give my best love to my friends, one and all, to Epstein, Rufinatscha, König, Röver, August and Eugene Miller, to Mr. and Mrs. Lippitt and all the Miller family and to any more who may remember me. Kindest remembrances also to Mr. and Mrs. Motley and their whole family; they all were very kind to me in past years at Dresden. I saw Miss Mary Motley, his daughter, in Washington a few days ago: she is a charming girl. Perhaps she might like to send by you to Vienna. I've not written to Vienna for a long time, from the laziness which so often prevents writing. It does not matter, for I shall write to them now. Can you find time to write me a few words before leaving this side? My father is at No. 40 State St., Lee, Higginson and Co., and would be very glad to see you.

Jim sends his love and good wishes.

Would it not be jolly to wake up some morning in Vienna, and then go to see one's old friends and wind up with a big concert? It will come all in good time, if my bullet does not come along; and if it does, "Nunc dimittis" will not be so unwelcome a song. My love again to you, old fellow, and to all in Vienna or in other places, and tell them that I often and often think of them and former times with very great pleasure. My friends

are still and always will be my greatest delight in life. But chiefly love to August Miller, Epstein, and Rufinatscha. And so good-bye, for we are saddling up to go off this moment.

Yrs.

H. L. H.

This letter crossed one from Thayer, then in Boston. Thayer's opinion of the "weak old President" was shared by many Bostonians.

"I am to sail in the Saxonia April 6 for Hamburg, and shall carry back with me the heartiest contempt for Abe Lincoln and old Halleck, but an unbounded admiration for the spirits of the Northern people. I tell you the uprising in the North was the grandest thing in modern history. . . . Last night I was in company with Gov. Andrew and he told me of Hooker — Fighting Joe — *the* man of men, and cheered me and encouraged me mightily. I have hopes that the weak old president may at length be forced to find out who his true friends are, and who are the real lovers of the country, and seek his counsellors from among them."

On March 17 came the sharp cavalry fight at Kelly's Ford. The First Massachusetts was not in this action, but three of its officers, performing staff duty, were wounded, Lieutenant "Nat" Bowditch mortally.<sup>1</sup>

"I liked the boy so much," Higginson wrote to Mrs. Bowditch. "His handsome face and pleasant smile will stay by me forever. He was in our tent (that of Col. Curtis and myself) very frequently, and often spent an evening with us, smoking his pipe. Poor Nat! The war made him a man and then took him away so quickly."

Hooker had now succeeded Burnside in command of the Army of the Potomac. "The sullen gloom of the camps soon

<sup>1</sup> Greely Curtis gave him some water, which he first offered to a wounded private. When told that he must die, he said: "Well, I hope I have done my duty. I am content."

disappeared, and a new spirit of pride and hope began to pervade the ranks," wrote Carl Schurz.

Hooker was a very blunt, brave officer [says Higginson in his Reminiscences]; insubordinate, a good fighter, and not very much more. He had been in the regular army and had afterward lived in California, where he did no good. It was when he took charge of the army that things began to get brisker. We had a tremendous review of the whole army, to which President Lincoln came. We marched by him in review, and it was the only time that I ever saw him. He was sitting on a horse, with General Hooker and other high officers by his side. He looked like marble, and was very strange in his black clothes and his tall black hat.

This glimpse of Lincoln was on the fifth of April. That month was brightened for the Higginson brothers by a visit from their father and brother George. Henry's war Diary, which unfortunately covers only the period from April 11 to May 4, 1863, gives some vivid pictures of the daily life of a cavalryman during the three weeks preceding Chancellorsville.

*April 11.* G. [Greely Curtis] and I were summoned by the Col., who laid before us orders to clear the country for three miles in front of our picket line of hostile inhabitants, spies, guerrillas, etc., etc. A dirty job and one likely to injure us. . . . Started at 3 o'clk P.M. with all our available force, I having the centre of the line to clean out. A beautiful night. I had asked to leave Jim in camp to welcome father and George, but was refused by the Col.

*April 12.* We were ordered to return to camp at 4 o'clk A.M. . . . Father and George arrived at noon. . . . They're looking very well. Father was of course supplied with every possible thing, — soap, beef-stock, sponges, tooth-brushes, flannels, candy, everything, which he distributed amidst our laughter.

Jolly old fellow he is! The same man, living for others only. His life is made up of little works, and on these he expends time, energy and ability enough for great works. 'Tis a pity he has no child worthy of him and none one tenth so good. He has been bright and cheerful as possible all day, asking every now and then for Jim, if he was away ten minutes. . . .

*April 13.* Were waked at 5 o'clk and hurried to be quite ready for the start, which was ordered notwithstanding the rain of last night. The Col. is in command of the brigade, so G. is in charge of the regiment. We formed about 7 o'clk before the camp, our own force amounting to about 425 men and 22 officers. Had some talk with father about my property, the little left, and he made some excellent suggestions about its disposition in case of death, a legacy to this and that one. He is always thinking of the lone, stray people on this earth, and suggested one or two relations to me, who need a little care — also one or two of my friends. . . . We left father and George about 8½ o'clk and marched to Hartwood church. The sky has been cloudy and the weather cold all day; the roads are quite fair except in the woods. Halted at Hartwood and thence proceeded to Elk Run, camping in a very close wood about 9 o'clk P.M. Very bad arriving so late. My nutmeg horse is lame from an old kick on the off fore-leg. Got to sleep late and was aroused early. By the way, I had a long talk with Dr. Osborne, who is a good fellow. Expressed my decided wish to die rather than to lose a leg, and desired the two surgeons, W. and Osborne, to note it in case of accident. They laughed, talked of the beauties of cork legs, of crippling wounds, etc., and did not at first believe me in earnest. I promised to shoot either of them who took off my leg. . . . Sacrifices! A young, healthy, unmarried man can learn, and profit himself very much by service. I do thank God that I never had but one feeling about the war, pure and undivided from the first; it is no credit to me, but resulted simply from my thought, wishes, the tone of my mind. I always did long

for some such war, and it came in the nick of time for me. Circumstances left me free to act, and indeed drove me to it.

*April 14.* Were awakened early and started about daylight for Bealeton. Our brigade to-day had the lead, and after some mistakes at last hit the road. A most beautiful warm day. The spring is really opening, the grass is getting green and the buds are swelling. We found the mule train of Gregg's Division passing, and so waited a little. After a march of 5 miles or so, we reached Bealeton and lay on the ground for some hours. Gregg is here with us close by the R.R. Buford is below at Kelly's Ford, where he will make a feint. Davis with Pleasonton's Division is farther up the river. Firing at Kelly's Ford and at Rappahannock Bridge. Some of Gregg's men dismounted, crossed the R.R. bridge and drove the enemy away; they then came back. Sent back all extras and also my Nutmeg to camp — 't is too bad to lose even for a time such a horse; he is so steady and strong and enduring. My little colt, Peter Smink, is full of fun. We encamped in a wood close by. What are we waiting for? . . .

*April 15.* We marched before daybreak, having been roused  $2\frac{1}{2}$  o'clk. Rained very hard, and the roads were horrid. Halted after some five miles, in a wood, and dismounted. . . . The crossing was given up on account of the storm and we encamped in the woods. It rained all day and all night tremendously, and wet everything and everybody. 'T is odd how well one can sleep between damp blankets in wet clothes and boots soaked thro' and thro'; yet we did very well. . . .

*April 16.* The sun came out and so we dried everything. . . . It has been a beautiful day and we had a good wash, the first since leaving camp. These little amenities of life must now be rare. Puttered over our little shelter tent and read a great deal, an article in the April "Atlantic," "A Spasm of Sense," written by a woman, I think, is pretty good, and in the right direction. . . . Newhall the other day expressed the greatest confidence in Greely. "The best in the division," he

said, and I believe so, too. Averell and Stoneman and Duffie have all excellent reputations and have claim to them in my belief, tho' I've never seen them do anything yet. But no one in the service here has the marked ability for cavalry work that G. has. Such is my opinion, and we shall see if others are not of the same mind before June 1st. The river and brooks are very high and we are short of forage — besides which, it is going to rain again. Had a pleasant chat with Charles A. [Adams] about Stephen and Dwight.

*April 17.* Cloudy still. . . . Jim and Greely were discussing Thackeray this morning; neither of them likes him, and think little good comes of his writings. They're mistaken. Thackeray does certainly present people to our gaze as they are; then comes the question, "Cannot we better them?" for "them" is nobody but ourselves. We are very short of forage and there is no prospect of any; streams are unfordable, etc. . . . [H. P.] Bowditch brought us two beautiful little flowers this morning.

*April 18.* Pleasant day. Broke camp and moved to Bealeton Station about noon. Detailed for picket to guard the river bank from Rappahannock Bridge to Lee's Ford at 12 o'clk M., a distance of 6 miles. Nothing worthy of note. . . .

*April 19.* Rode to the right of the lines and got a splendid view from above Lee's Ford across the country to the mountains. A little more firing, but no signs of the enemy until 12 o'clk, when some 200 cavalry (rebel) were seen at a distance over Hedgeman's River. . . . Made a sketch of the picket line. Relieved at 6 o'clk P.M. and returned thro' the mud to Bealeton Station, where I found the preparations for a six-days' jaunt making.

*April 20.* Cloudy, a little rain, wind N. East. Started about 11 o'clk for Sulphur Springs. Rained very hard for seven or eight hours, roads dreadful. Beautiful country, more especially near the Springs, but no cultivation at all this year. Davis's column in advance, next ours, then Gregg's, Buford's

last. Encamped about 5 o'clk in a chestnut and oak wood. Mac, C.'s [C. F. Adams's] dog, caught and slew a pig.<sup>1</sup> . . .

*April 21.* Cloudy, a little rain, still N.E. Changed our location to a nice little grove, had a bath and read a pamphlet by Stillé — very good. Nothing done all day — waiting for the river to fall, I fancy. . . . The plans of the campaign are kept a secret. . . .

*April 22.* Pleasant day, wind westerly. Bowditch's and Fillebrown's parties returned from picket. Discussion of campaigns here and in Europe. . . . Our real strength lies in moving quickly and cutting lines of communication, as well as harassing the enemy in falling back. In this we can do much, when Lee retreats on Richmond. This next four to eight weeks will settle the campaign. . . .

*April 23.* Hard rain, N. Easterly still, the little brook at our feet boiling with water and everything afloat. Read, and wrote to John and to Mary.

*April 24.* Raining hard and blowing well. Had our shelter tent logged in. Rumors of a mail. This lying still is horrid. Read and wrote and washed. It would be a relief to get answers to some of my letters before starting, tho' waiting for something seems to be the normal state of men. Browning's "Men and Women" seems to please Greely, too; no wonder.

*April 25.* Clear and bright. Wind N.W. Read and read, and dreamed away as usual. Had a ride on Peter, who was full of mischief and desirous of running and jumping. Still no mail. . . .

*April 26.* Clear and cold. Wrote to Charley and to N——. Found a quantity of anemones in the woods. . . . Lt. Col. Taylor of Stoneman's staff came to inquire into our wants, etc. . . . Taylor said that "Charley L. was the most perfect born soldier whom he had ever seen." . . .

*April 27.* Read and wrote a little. Pleasant day. . . .

<sup>1</sup> "Mac" was an English bull-dog "with a very open countenance," and a great favorite in the regiment.

*April 28.* . . . Were ordered to move about 9 o'clk P.M., which we did — rode till 3 o'clk next morning thro' mud and water. The country is very wet. Camped in the woods near Bealeton and slept.

*April 29.* Got up at 5 A.M. and started about 7 o'clk. Gleason examined Rappahannock Ford and thought it too deep for use. Marched to Kelly's Ford slowly, forded there, and grazed our horses on beautiful grass for several hours. Three corps of infantry had crossed, 5th, 11th and 12th, and had gone on. Heard also that Hooker had crossed below Fredericksburg. . . . Crossing the river was very pretty; the water came half way up the horses' withers. Three columns were put across together at one time, one swimming, one fording, and one on the pontoon. . . . We went on a mile or two thro' the woods, passed the scene of the Kellysville fight, a beautiful field. Just as we got there firing began, first carbines, then a few shells. We formed, and got thro' another belt of woods, then formed line on a huge field, where also the former fight took place. It was just dark, and in ten minutes we returned to the edge of the woods, dismounted, and kept the squadrons formed all night. We made very small fires indeed, fed horses, and slept thro' a hard rain all night. . . .

*April 30.* Got up very early, fed and breakfasted as we could, which was very little. It was a fast day and we fasted. One eats little on a trip of this kind. Started behind the battery and stayed there. A column in the road and one each side in the fields were moved all day. Sometimes by fours, sometimes by squadrons. A very beautiful country indeed, this Culpeper country; the grass is wonderfully green, the slopes from hill to valley are beautiful. Saw some cattle and some horses, but very few. The houses are quite fine and very stately. . . . Got to Culpeper Court House about noon. . . . Heard that Stuart had passed thro' two hours before us, with about four thousand men and artillery. They are marching all night. . . . Stopped several hours for the mule

train, and then marched on to Cedar Mt., where we examined the field carefully. It is a splendid position to defend. The bones are lying over the field now. Had a description of the battle from Major Farrington, R. I. Cav., who was there from the beginning. . . . The mail party came up. Dr. Warner sorted the mail in the ambulance, and we read our letters on horseback. Got letters from Mary, Laura, N—, father, Col. Williams, Clark, Pat Jackson, Bob Shaw, Mr. Austin. . . . Bob's letter was funny. . . . Marched around the mountain and went over very heavy roads some eight miles towards Somerville Ford. Slept in a swamp, which was full of water. . . . Jim went on picket.

*May 1.* . . . Fed and started about 8 o'clk. Marched a mile thro' fearful mud and halted in a field. Genl. Averell and Col. Davis were nearly taken while reconnoitering this morning. Jim led his men to a charge and took three prisoners. The enemy ran very fast. Gleason had a fight with two men, shot one and beat him badly. Both were unhorsed, and a second rebel came. Gleason drove him away. We fired at the enemy and they at us all day. Lieut. Phillips was shot in the neck, probably will die. We did nothing all day and encamped after a blind march thro' the woods in the swamp again.

*May 2.* Aroused early and ordered to march in  $\frac{1}{2}$  of an hour. Marched and waited and marched thro' a beautiful country to Stevensburg, and then to Ely's Ford. Heard bad and good reports of a big battle; had a long discussion with G. and concluded it to be a drawn battle. Encamped about 8 o'clk. From 4 to 8 we heard very heavy firing indeed toward Chancellorsville, where the forces are. Aroused about 12 o'clk by a volley fired into the 2d brigade by someone unknown. Turned out all hands. I went with the carbineers into a wood on foot to hold it. Great confusion in the arrangement of our brigade. Col. S. knew nothing of his regiment or of the ground. Genl. A. decided that it was a mistake of our own infantry. Left a small picket on foot, and got to sleep about 1 $\frac{1}{2}$  o'clk in a wood.

*May 3.* Wakened with orders for moving. Sent out with

our whole regiment to picket the road from Culpeper, etc., and returned about 3 o'clk. Nothing to be seen. Heard various reports of the battle, but nothing authentic. Quin and several of our men rode to our lines as escort and took some prisoners. Learned that the volley of the night before was fired by the rebels. . . . Crossed with our brigade alone at Ely's Ford, and rode to our fortification, about two miles. Went inside some two or three miles and encamped in a field near the United States Ford. Saw the wounded — which is horrid. Everything in excellent order — 1st, 3rd, 5th, 11th and 12th corps are here. . . . We are well entrenched. We had very heavy fighting this morning, but little this afternoon here. The heights of Fredericksburg were taken by Sedgwick to-day. Genl. Berry was killed on our right. Slept here — without a picket or a guard.

*May 4.* Wakened by shelling from the rebels. Learned that the 11th and 12th Corps were sent out to attack Jackson's train — 11th thought the 12th was taken and so ran away; 12th came back, found Jackson's men in their (12th) entrenchments, and cleaned them right out. 11th marched to the front at Howard's request. 12th chaffed them badly. Sedgwick took the F. heights by eight charges, each time carrying a battery. Birney said to be in the enemy's rear. Stoneman has cut the R.R. at the Pamunkey. Averell relieved of his command and ordered to Washington — we don't know the reason.

Here the Diary ends, on the last day of the three days' battle of Chancellorsville. The grandiloquent Hooker had measured himself against Lee and Jackson, and there was none to deliver him from the paw of the lion and the bear. Hooker had lost his nerve, or, as he himself said later: "Double-day, I was not hurt by a shell, and I was not drunk. For once I lost confidence in Hooker, and that is all there is to it."<sup>1</sup> At midnight on May 4 he decided to recross the Rappahannock. How little an intelligent officer, in forced inactivity although

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in Gamaliel Bradford's *Union Portraits*, p. 64.

within sight and sound of a great battle, may know of what is really happening, may be seen in Major Higginson's hasty note to his father:—

NEAR U.S. FORD, May 4, 1863.

DEAREST FATHER:—

. . . So far as I can see or hear, we are well off (the army, I mean), have entrenched ourselves here, have taken Fredericksburg Heights, carrying eight batteries in succession, have cut the railroad near the Pamunkey River, have Stoneman with some 4000 or 5000 cavalry in the rear of the enemy, have killed, etc., a great many rebels. There has been savage fighting; the 2d Regiment has lost 170 men out of some 400 or less, I think. The 11th Corps (Sigel's famous men) ran away yesterday and has been marched to the front to-day at Howard's request, he being the commander. The 12th Corps (Banks's old men) cleaned Jackson's men out of our entrenchments wherein they had got while the 11th Corps ran away.

We are all right, so good-bye, and love to all. H.

Even three days later, when the regiment was back in its old camp at Falmouth, he could write: "Still I regard Hooker's movement a success; it was brilliant and has inflicted a terrible loss on the enemy. . . . Whip Lee's army we can and will. . . . We are expecting orders to move every moment. I heard last night that the Infantry was again under marching orders to move either last night or this morning in pursuit of Lee's army." The rumor was true enough, but the "pursuit" was northward, following Lee's triumphant invasion of Pennsylvania! And Lincoln, hearing that Hooker had recrossed the Rappahannock, was crying: "My God! My God! what will the country say!" while Sumner was exclaiming, "Lost, lost, all is lost!"<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Rhodes, *History of the Civil War*, p. 222. A remarkably clear account of the battle of Chancellorsville is given by Higginson's friend and comrade, Colonel C. F. Morse, in his *Letters Written During the Civil War* (privately printed, Boston, 1898), p. 127.

All was not lost, as we know. Meade succeeded Hooker in command of the Army of the Potomac, and Lee's invasion of Pennsylvania ended at Gettysburg. In the two months between Chancellorsville and Gettysburg the Federal cavalry "found itself" at last, and Major Higginson got the chance for which he had so long been waiting.

Let us go back to his letter of May 7, with its optimism about the army, and its pleasant news about many friends: —

I received a letter from Bob Shaw, speaking of his wedding, this afternoon. . . . Charley should be married too; it is much better, for his wife might go to him while in winter quarters. . . . William Channing was here this afternoon, he having been on duty with the Sanitary people here. . . . Jim is very well and happy; he has been in charge of a company for some three or four weeks. . . . Bob Shaw wrote to me about Frank, speaking very well of him; he will get promotion faster there than in the 2d Cavalry. Did I ask you to tell Charley that I would like his gray horse very much, if he will take him to Fortress Monroe and keep him until we meet. I need another horse and cannot in any way find one; Washington has none. He wants the money (\$200) for the beast now.

A letter to his sister Mary, on May 8, contains a curious prophecy about Anna Lowell nursing him in case he is wounded, and also a characteristically delicate and thoughtful message to Mrs. Rogers, the sister of James Savage, killed at Cedar Mountain the year before.

CAMP NEAR FALMOUTH, May 8, 1863.

DEAR MOLLY, —

. . . Bob Shaw has just written to Greely and me after his marriage; he is as happy as a king. I should much like to see his wife, for I have heard a great deal of her for years past. . . . For years I have taken people on trust or by their faces, and

gone along with them, waiting until the little upper crust, which is of one kind or another always, was melted. It has always turned out well.

If I do get hurt or ill, I shall be sent to the Armory Hospital, where Anna Lowell and Molly Felton are — that is always possible, and I shall be well nursed then. But their life this summer will be hard, for it will be a season full of horrors. An enormous number of wounded men, ours and rebel, are here awaiting transportation. These late battles have cost many lives to us, and very many to the enemy. Jim, by the way, made a charge with twenty men in his command at a body of cavalry, and chased them across the Rapidan River. . . . The spring is very late this year in Virginia.

P.S. . . . I send you a flower which I picked a week ago on the very spot where the severest fighting at Cedar Mountain took place. Give it to Mrs. Rogers, if she would like it, with my love.

Colonel Robert G. Shaw ("Bob"), it will be remembered, was now at the Readville camp, drilling his gallant negro regiment, the Fifty-Fourth Massachusetts. F. L. Higginson was one of his first lieutenants. Colonel Charles Russell Lowell ("Charley") was also at Readville, drilling his new regiment, the Second Massachusetts Cavalry. He was betrothed to Josephine Shaw, "Bob's" sister. Major Higginson's old friend Mrs. Tappan, writing him from Newport on May 7, says: —

"Mrs. Tweedie has just been in and says Willie James saw the colored regiment reviewed,— Bob Shaw's,— and that they were a very fine set of men, finer looking than any white regiment he had seen. Charles Lowell and Effie Shaw sat on their great war horses looking on, and looked so like a king and queen that he did not venture to speak to them. Charles appears perfectly happy, as well he may be, for Effie is a very fine girl, true and full of character."

William James, it may be added, had a brother, Wilkinson

James, who was Adjutant of the Fifty-Fourth and was severely wounded in the assault on Fort Wagner.

It was on May 28 that the Fifty-Fourth sailed from Boston, after a great popular demonstration in honor of the first colored regiment organized in the North. Henry Higginson remembered the day, in his camp at Bealeton, Virginia. "The 54th sails today, I see by the newspapers. I am very grateful that Frank is in it. Gentlemen are needed in such regiments. . . . The gray horse has come, and is a capital purchase."

That gray horse came just in time, for the major's big roan had gone lame, and the First Cavalry was moving northward now, in Colonel Duffie's division of Pleasonton's Corps. They were intermittently in touch with the Confederate cavalry, commanded by Stuart and FitzHugh Lee, who were guarding the right flank of their army. Pleasonton crossed to the south bank of the Rappahannock at Kelly's Ford, and had a sharp fight on June 9 at Brandy Station. Four squadrons under Captain Tewksbury and Lieutenant J. J. Higginson made a reckless charge against two regiments of Confederate cavalry. "We went through them like a whirlwind," said Sergeant Sherman. This battle of Brandy Station, inconclusive as it was, "made the Federal cavalry," according to a Southern military critic. "One result of incalculable advantage certainly did follow this battle — it *made* the Federal cavalry. Up to that time confessedly inferior to the Southern horsemen, they gained on this day that confidence in themselves and in their commanders which enabled them to contest so fiercely the subsequent battlefields of June, July, and October."<sup>1</sup>

Regaining the north bank of the river, Pleasonton reorganized his cavalry, Buford now commanding the First Division, and Gregg the Second. The First Massachusetts was in Kilpatrick's brigade of Gregg's Division. Following the line of the Orange and Alexandria Railroad to Manassas, they turned to the left, across the Bull Run battlefields, toward the passes

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in *History of the First Cavalry*, p. 140.

in the Bull Run hills. On June 16, in camp near Union Mills, Major Higginson wrote his last letter home for many a month:

We have been at work every day for 17 days, and when we have been in camp I have been so very weary as to be unfit to write a line. Twice we have been nearly 24 hours on duty, that is to say, in the saddle. . . . Jim and I are very well indeed. . . . The rebel army will get well into Pennsylvania, will anger the people . . . and finally will get a severe whipping. . . . It is a desperate move on Lee's part, but it can be checkmated by someone, and turned into a great and final defeat. We have yet to see who "someone" is. . . . We are going to have a very severe campaign, I suppose. . . . You spoke of sending one or two little articles; send nothing now. . . .

On the following afternoon, June 17, Kilpatrick's brigade reached Aldie Gap, a narrow opening in the hills, through which roads ran to Snicker's Gap and Ashby's Gap in the Blue Ridge, and so on to the valley of the Shenandoah. Pickets of the Second Virginia Cavalry had been posted all day at the village of Aldie, and four other regiments of Virginians, with one battery, were close at hand, hidden by the woods. As Kilpatrick's troopers rode noisily into the little village, — which lay drowsy in the June heat, — shots were fired from behind a stone wall. Kilpatrick ordered Lieutenant-Colonel Greely Curtis to ascertain the enemy's force, and Captain L. M. Sargent's squadron, Lieutenant Fillebrown commanding the first platoon, was sent forward. This squadron charged the outposts of the Second Virginia Regiment, and drove them back, but in the excitement of the charge, failed to stop at the point indicated by Curtis, who now ordered Major Higginson to halt Sargent's squadron. As this order was being carried out, a regiment of Virginia cavalry — probably the Fifth, under Colonel Rosser — charged down the rough winding road upon the Massachusetts men. For a moment there was fierce hand-

to-hand fighting with sabres and pistols. Major Higginson fell, severely wounded, Captain Sargent lay apparently dead, and Lieutenant Fillebrown was shot through the body. Lieutenant Parsons, reforming the squadron, bore the enemy back an instant, only to find himself cut off from his regiment. Kilpatrick's brigade was not in effective position, while the Virginians knew every foot of ground. The Fourth and Fifth Virginia drove back Captain Tewksbury, who was striving to support Captain Sargent's men. Captain C. F. Adams's squadron was holding its ground, but nothing more.<sup>1</sup> The Fourth New York — Cesnola's regiment — refused to follow their colonel in the charge, and he was captured with the colors. Colonel Curtis now ordered Lieutenant Davis's squadron of the First Massachusetts to charge up the narrow road. But dismounted sharpshooters, hidden behind the stone wall, opened a murderous fire, and Davis's whole squadron was killed or captured. Among the prisoners was Lieutenant James J. Higginson.

Then the currents of this confused battle turned. The four squadrons of the First Massachusetts, which had borne the brunt of the fighting, had lost more than half their men — killed, wounded, and captured. But Gregg now brought up the First Maine, and Kilpatrick swung the Second New York and the Sixth Ohio into action. That did the business. As the sun went down over Aldie Gap, the Confederates fell back along the Snickersville road, under Stuart's orders.

Let us now return to Major Higginson, whom we left lying

<sup>1</sup> "My poor men were just slaughtered and all we could do was to stand still and be shot down, while the other squadrons rallied behind us. The men fell right and left and the horses were shot through and through, and no man turned his back, but they only called on me to charge. I could n't charge, except across a ditch, up a hill and over two high stone walls, from behind which the enemy were slaying us; so I held my men there until, what with men shot down and horses wounded and plunging, my ranks were disordered and then I fell slowly back to some woods." *A Cycle of Adams Letters*, vol. 2, pp. 36, 37. This letter, while sketching vividly the fortune of Colonel Adams's immediate command, gives a most inadequate account of the engagement as a whole.

in the road with a sabre-cut across his face and a pistol bullet at the base of his spine. Many a time, in later years, did his friends persuade him to tell the story of that rough-and-tumble fight: how "the one who struck me across the face was a fine handsome-looking fellow,"<sup>1</sup> and the one whom I hit on the head was a bad-looking chap"; how Rosser's men left him to die, taking with them the gray horse, wounded though it was by four bullets;<sup>2</sup> how the Major painfully pulled off his shoulder-straps, the only distinguishing mark between him and a private; how he took out his diary to "make a memorandum or two and say good-bye to my father"; and having done this, proceeded to crawl through the woods and down to the brook, and so on and on until his men found him.

But it is better to quote a few paragraphs from the Reminiscences.

It had been a hot, tiresome ride. The men came along in pretty good order, although one of the regiments belonging to another brigade galloped about to get water, and acted in a foolish way. Just as we came to the town of Aldie, we heard a little firing, and were ordered to the front. As we rode through the town, we saw a little fighting going on in front of us — a little charge by some men of another regiment. We turned to the right, went up by a little wood, and our regiment was put into a field close by a farmhouse and close by the road. There, Colonel Curtis, in command, left me with two squadrons, and

<sup>1</sup> Major Higginson's son, Mr. A. H. Higginson, tells me that his father supposed that the Confederate officer who gave him the sabre cut across his face was Colonel, afterwards General, Rosser. When the Hooker statue was dedicated in Boston, a delegation of Confederate veterans was invited to attend, and among them was General Rosser. Major Higginson and his son were dining in the University Club that evening, and one of these Confederate officers, who, Mr. A. H. Higginson thinks, was General Rosser, came over to their table and, touching Major Higginson's shoulder, remarked genially: "I want to see how good a job I did on your face, that day at Aldie." The Major gave him both hands, and the two old men fraternized until the small hours of the morning.

<sup>2</sup> The gray was recaptured, and served Major Higginson as a riding-horse for many years.

went to attend to something else. I rode up to this farmhouse, and saw one or two soldiers' jackets hanging at the door, and was looking about, when I saw a regiment coming down at full tilt on the road towards us. I immediately ordered one squadron into the road and we charged these men. They turned straight around and ran away. We came very near their rear, but could not reach them. They went down a hill and at the top I ordered a halt. Captain Sargent, with two or three men, rode straight on down into a valley after a few of the troopers we had been pursuing, and began fighting them. I yelled to him to come back, but he would not do so, and fearing that he would get into trouble, I rode down to give him the order, when right behind us came a whole regiment of Confederate cavalry at full speed. I shouted to Sargent and the two or three men with him to ride for their lives, and we galloped up a hill in front of us, where we lost one man through the balking of his horse. We reached the top of the hill, and the Confederates had stopped, as we were not worth pursuing. Sargent turned around in his saddle and made faces at them with his fingers, whereat they pursued us, and we rode down another very steep hill, and at the bottom they caught us, and we had a little shindy. Sargent was knocked from his horse and shot, as he thought, just above the heart. One of our men was killed, and one lieutenant was shot through the side. In striking a man opposite to me, who was using improper language, I was knocked from my horse, and found myself in the road. Over me was standing a man whom I had unhorsed, and who struck at my head. He then proposed to take me prisoner, but I told him I should die in a few minutes, for I put my hand under and found a hole in my backbone. He took what he could get of my goods, and rode off, leaving my horse, which had been shot with four bullets.

So in five minutes the shindy was over, and three of us were wounded and one dying. When they were out of sight, I induced Captain Sargent to get up off the ground and come

under a tree, where I left him close by a little house. He declared he could go no further and should die in a few minutes. I crawled along to a brook, where I lay down and drank a pailful of water, then crossed the brook and got up into a wood. When I had nearly reached a fence, I heard some noise, and lay down in the leaves and made a little memorandum in my notebook. Just then a solid shot came down close by me. Presently, when all was quiet, I got up again, climbed over the fence, and walked in the direction where fighting was still going on, and presently came in sight of our men, many of whom had been killed or wounded. I lay down on the ground, was presently put on a horse, which I could hardly bear, and taken to the hospital, where Dr. Osborne looked at me, and began to patch me up. He made a little slit in my back to see if he could find the ball, but could not; as a matter of fact, I had a pistol ball in the sacrum, a good slash across the cheek, a punch in the shoulder, which was of little account, and a bad whack on the head, which also turned out to have no results except a sore. Then I was taken down to the village by Colonel Curtis,—some men carrying the litter,—and put in a house with one or two other prisoners, and there left for the night. I heard that my brother had been captured, and a good many of our men had been killed or wounded; in fact, we had lost about half of our regiment. But we had beaten the enemy back. . . .

Luckily for me, I was in splendid condition, and lost considerable blood. The next day we were put into ambulances and sent toward Alexandria. The road was very rough indeed. Our lieutenant, who had been found and brought in by some men, was with me in the ambulance, and he suffered considerable pain. We drove over a very rough road which had been much used, tree-roots standing out and giving us terrible jerks. About dusk we reached the railway and were put into freight cars. Of course we had had nothing to eat, nor could I eat at all, my face being in such a condition that any move-

ment was painful. I could stand up or lie down, but could not sit down, and I remember well one of our men lifted me into the car, and was greatly shocked. He was a Scotchman named McNabb, a most insubordinate, troublesome soldier, but was a good man after all.

The train jerked us to and fro, and we got into Alexandria about one or two o'clock in the morning, were taken out by a lot of young men, who acted as if they were on a picnic, and who got us into ambulances with many jokes, and at last we were carried to a hospital, and got to bed somewhere. I had a little straw mattress, with a deep hollow in the middle. It was a great relief, but still was very bad to lie on, for I could lie only on one side, one shoulder being hurt, the back of my head being hurt, and my back being hurt, and, on the other side, my face being cut. Our wounds were dressed, and I found in the morning lying next me Dr. John Perry, whose leg had been broken by a kick of his horse. On my other side lay our lieutenant, who had considerable morphine to relieve his pain and who would sit up in bed and eat peanuts. I knew that he had been shot through the side, and I watched to see them come out, but none of them came.<sup>1</sup>

There were two or three rough privates who waited upon us, and tried to help. They were good boys, but did not know anything and were not nice at first, but presently they learned better manners. My difficulty was getting in a position in which I could lie without excessive weariness; there was no good side, and I could not move without putting my arms around somebody's neck and then swinging from one side to another.

John Perry was waiting to have his leg set. Presently the young surgeon brought in a lady from Lexington, who was an amateur nurse, and had never set a leg, but wished to do so.

<sup>1</sup> Lieutenant Fillebrown is still living (1921), and sends word to me through General Morris Schaff that, when their wounds were to be dressed, Major Higginson said to the surgeon: "Look after that man [Fillebrown] first. He's hurt a great deal more than I am."

She begged to set this leg, took nearly an hour about it, so that John got faint — and the surgeon let her do it. Then she proposed to wash my wounds, but I told her I was much obliged to her, but would get along without it.

There we lay several days. Presently Colonel Lowell came to see me, found out about my condition, and reported to my father, who came a day later. He, together with Channing Clapp and two or three soldiers, carried me to the ferry. We crossed the river, and I was taken to the Armory Square Hospital, where Anna Lowell was a nurse, and was put in her ward. Mary Felton was another nurse, and came in to see me. The bed was good, and I was much more comfortable. Then, the next day Anna brought the surgeon of the hospital, who was a friend of hers, and who dressed my wounds carefully. Anna saw that I had good food which I could eat, and I had not very much pain. It was decided to send me home, and after the second or third day and a restless night or two, I was taken to the railroad and put into a car full of wounded men, which was going North. All the seats had been taken out, and a lot of beds slung from standards one over the other and one beside the other, with just a narrow space between. Opposite to me lay a man, young and pleasant-looking, who had lost his leg up to his thigh, and was evidently dying. I saw many horrid cases in the hospital. John Perry went in the same car with me, and as the mattresses on which we lay were slung from rubber straps, we did as well as we could; but it was a dreadful night, and the language was fearful.

In the morning we were at Jersey City, got across the river, and then we were put into wagons, and I was driven to a hospital in Union Square, where father got Doctor Stone, and he redressed my wounds. John Perry was driven to his home, where his leg had to be broken again and set straight, for this friendly nurse, who was learning her business, had set it crooked. That night I was taken home in a sleeping-car and carried to father's house in Chauncy Street, where I passed

several months. After a few days, Dr. Cabot, who had examined my wounds and had seen a piece of cloth and piece of bone come out of my back, thought he had found the bullet. He had already probed for it, and the second time, by using a porcelain probe, got the black mark of the lead, and then knew that he had found the bullet. So he gave me ether for the second time, and when I came to, the bullet was out, and he was sitting in the chair saying, "Thank God!" The truth is that the bullet had been close by the seat of the nerves, and if it had not come out, I should have been paralyzed as to my lower limbs. That is what I had feared from the first, because I knew that I was shot pretty nearly where William Sedgwick was shot, and he was paralyzed below his waist, and presently died. I had a dreadful night after the extraction of the bullet, for he had touched one of the great nerves, and that began to beat like a hammer; but father gave me so much laudanum that I went to sleep and the next day was all right. After a while, I was well enough to go downstairs, and presently to go out to Waltham and stay with Mr. Frank Lowell and his daughter.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In Mr. J. T. Morse's brilliant biographical sketch of Major Higginson, printed in the *Harvard Graduates' Magazine* for March, 1920, and also printed in the *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society* for 1920, appear two pleasant footnotes to the Aldie affair, written by Mrs. Higginson: —

"Some years ago, when Mr. Higginson and I were in Washington (I have forgotten the exact date), I asked him to take me to Aldie and show me the ground where the battle was fought, — it was really not a battle but an active skirmish fight, — where Mr. Higginson was wounded, which was the 17th of June, 1863. We went first by rail to Leesburg and there we hired a mule team and open wagon and drove to Aldie. The wagon could n't go as far as the battlefield itself, so we left it by the roadside and walked. As we approached the field we saw a man plowing, who said: 'Hello, friends, you come to see where we beat you Yankees at the Battle of Aldie.' (He was a pleasant-looking farmer, I should say about 12 or 15 years younger than Mr. Higginson was at that time.) Evidently he was an ex-Confederate. We said: 'Yes, we came to see it and to look the place over.' Upon which he replied: 'Well, I remember all about it myself. I was about a dozen years old and I heard the fighting from my house which is over there,' — pointing to a farmhouse at no great distance, — 'and when the fighting had stopped, my mother said, "I want you to go with this pail of water and give a drink to all the men you find there, no matter whether they are Federalists or Confederates."

There is a Federal major there who has been badly wounded and a captain and other wounded men, and I want you to look after all of them." So I went. There were one or two wounded men, but I could n't find the Major. I looked everywhere for him, asked a few men who were left if they knew anything about him, but they said they did n't. They believed that in some way he must have managed to get back to camp, although wounded. Well, the long and short of it is that I could n't find him anywhere — he got away.'

"Upon which, my husband laughed and said, 'Yes, you are right; he did get away. I am the Major.' The man laughed heartily, held out his hand and said: 'Well, Major, I am glad to see you. At least, it is all right now.' We walked over the whole place, Mr. Higginson explaining to me in detail just all the action of the fight. We saw the monument which had been erected on the spot, giving the names of the men engaged in the fight; also, names of prisoners and the wounded men, among which were Mr. Higginson's own brother, Captain James J. Higginson, and his own name — as having been badly wounded. It was a lovely day in spring and the place looked as peaceful as if there had never been any fighting there.

"Another incident connected with Aldie is also interesting: —

"My son, who is a member of various hunting clubs in this country, was riding with a hunting club of the region all about Aldie, — and in Aldie, — when one of the Southern members said to him: 'By the way, was n't your father wounded at the battle of Aldie? If so, I wish you would give him this sword, which was picked up on the battlefield; he may like to keep it as a remembrance.' This sword is now hanging in Mr. Higginson's room and is a very precious relic to us."

## CHAPTER VII

### THE CIVIL WAR: THIRD PHASE

Resuming, marching, ever in darkness marching, on in the ranks,  
The unknown road still marching.

— WALT WHITMAN, *Drum-Taps*.

It was in the little house at 22 Chauncy Street, then, that Henry Higginson, tended lovingly by his father, — for there was no other nurse, — tossed restlessly during those July days that decided the ultimate victory of the North. Higginson had done his best; had waited long for his "one crowded hour of glorious life"; had been cut and beaten down in an obscure, random fight; and here he lay, hopelessly "out of it," while both his old regiments were marching into Gettysburg!

On July 4 Boston got the news that Meade had defeated Lee on the previous day, and that Grant had taken Vicksburg. Faithful Greely Curtis, stricken now with malaria, and able to keep in his saddle for but one week more, writes on July 6 from Westminster, Maryland: —

"The men are moving so that I have but  $\frac{1}{2}$  minute to write — Genl. Kilpatrick sent me down here with one squadron and 500 prisoners — now the whole army seems to be moving in pursuit.

". . . It was a tremendous fight at Gettysburg and we whipped. The good old army of the Potomac fought splendidly. Thursday afternoon it went very hard with us and *looked* like a defeat. By the grace of God a council of corps commanders decided to stand and fight it out the next day. Friday it was terrible, but we had a strong position and the slaughter of the gray-backs was — what shall I say — awful and splendid. At any rate I saw heaps of dead 30 in a pile, touching. Now I

*suppose the rebels are in full retreat. If the army from Washington will but move up and cut off their retreat to Richmond, I see no reason why the war should not be over, up here, in three weeks. We have had the hardest sort of work, but being in a manner detached we have managed to take pretty good care of the horses and have lost but few. Morse tells me that the 2nd never fought so well — 7 color-bearers shot in about 20 minutes, and men jumping out of the ranks, vying with each other for the bloody honor of carrying it."*

Two days later he writes from Frederick, Maryland: —

" . . . The army has been moving through here to-day and yesterday. We hear that the rebels are crossing at Williamsport — I never thought that we could *overtake* them between Gettysburg and W'msport, — the map will show you why, — but I did hope and fairly believe that Halleck would know enough to try to cut off their retreat with fresh troops either on this side of the river or in the valley of the Shenandoah. Hurrah for Vicksburg! *If* we only follow these scoundrels up vigorously, we can sit down under our Thanksgiving fig-tree and eat the turkeys thereof. . . ."

And on July 18, while still with the regiment, although incapacitated for service, Colonel Curtis writes from Harper's Ferry some valuable notes upon Meade's pursuit of Lee.

"The 1st and 2nd days at Gettysburg we were crowded. In the third and final struggle our lines were held throughout and their repulse was complete and deadly. Their retreat was not a rout, as the newspapers would have you believe. They *were* in a hurry, but not in a mob. They took up a strong line near Hagerstown, a part of it passing right through our old camping ground at St. James College, and evidently awaited an attack in preference to crossing with insufficient means to do it rapidly. Meade, it seems to me at the time did n't mean to attack unless he could get them on the wing. It was said on pretty good authority that we were to have attacked last Sunday if the field had not been so soft with rain that artillery could not

be handled. The fields *were* soft, very soft. Our brigade, under the d——dest fool you ever dreamed of, H—— by name, was sent down the St. James road to W'msport to feel the enemy. We did nothing. Our regt. was put on the advance 2 days in 3, and if I had obeyed all the orders I rec'd from the sapient H—— there would have been very little of the regt. left. But he was such an overpowering damned fool of a retired (or X) barkeeper that I made no bones at all of doing just what I darned pleased and he was happy. We fired away lots of carbine ammunition as skirmishers dismounted, attacking a wood held by infantry, had 2 or 3 men wounded and advanced slowly to within  $\frac{1}{2}$  a mile of their lines. . . . The aft. we crossed came the news that the rebs had crossed the night before. It was and is a sad blow, but I am not sure that Meade was not right in refusing to attack them posted, as they were, strongly. I saw Morse day before yesterday, here, and he says that he thinks we should have been repulsed and the *best* corps commanders are said to have been of the same opinion. I think there was a want of information which *should* have been procured at any cost, save a general engagement, which seemed and seems to me the only want of generalship on Meade's part. . . .

"Now everything appears uncertain: whether we are to recruit the army in strength and rest, or press on in the old route to Richmond. Since leaving the Potomac the A. P. has really done splendidly in marching and fighting, but I think that the life of the thing has fizzed out now that Lee has recouped. Still the Southern and S. Western news is so cheering that I am in favor of pushing them while they are tottering, if some good plan can be speedily adopted for so doing. If we are to have merely a repetition of last winter's work, then I am fairly heartsick. It seems to me that every time we have followed in the steps of Geo. B. [McClellan] we have done well and when varying from his plans we have done ill. There is a strong and general confidence in Meade, which even Lee's escape has not destroyed. Our regt. is in good shape — well shod, short

officered, and much fatigued, but the horses in good condition, and the poor old dear has this time managed to get ahead of other regiments in stealing forage, horses, etc. . . .

"Personal — I am kind o' run down. I made up my mind to see this campaign through and did up to the crossing here — but now am lying off, sleeping and eating and getting strong very fast. Shall be fit for duty very soon. . . ."

But Greely Curtis was never again fit for military duty.

On the evening of that very day, July 18, came the fatal assault of the Fifty-Fourth Massachusetts upon Fort Wagner. Colonel Robert Gould Shaw, at the head of his negro regiment, scaled the parapet, but was shot dead as he was shouting, "Forward, Fifty-Fourth." "Stainless soldier on the walls," wrote Emerson in his "Voluntaries," and St. Gaudens has immortalized him in bronze. But neither verse nor bronze can be finer than the words of Shaw's father, when he heard that his son had been buried in the common trench with his negroes: "Nor is there any monument so worthy of a soldier as the mound heaped over him by the bodies of his comrades."

James Savage, Stephen Perkins, and now "Bob" Shaw! Only one other blow of equal or even greater poignancy remained to fall upon Henry Higginson; but Charles Lowell was to bear for another year what seemed a charmed life. News from the front came slowly, but it was learned that Lieutenant F. L. Higginson, of Colonel Shaw's regiment, had been assigned to the command of a fatigue detail on that July evening, and had not participated in the attack on Wagner. Lieutenant James J. Higginson, the merry, stammering, indomitable "Jim," captured at Aldie, was lying in Libby Prison.

"Don't forget to tell me what has become of my little brown horse [he writes from prison to Henry]. Poor Rats! He was taken and now where he is, I don't know. Did you lose your gray horse? I remember you were on him that Aldie day. Do you recollect our halting on the old Bull Run battlefield that

morning, Brüderchen? That was where I last saw you. I had no idea that somebody shot you while you were down — which little fact I have carefully noted in my memory, for future reference. My ideas on the subject of using arms in a fight (my own, I mean) have undergone a most complete change in the past few months and my scruples have vanished. I used to think officers ought not to fight themselves — only direct. Tell me all about the regiment and its conduct throughout the summer. I am quite well, beyond a few scurvy sores, not serious, however. Send me in the next box a parcel of old papers, from June 1st down, especially those relative to Gettysburg and the attack on Ft. Wagner."

Never, in fact, were more cheerful letters sent from Libby Prison than those by James Higginson.

"At first it was weary work [he writes in August], and time hung heavy on our hands; but the books we got helped us greatly. My Virgil and some French books lent me by friends in the prison have given me great pleasure. . . . The Western men here I like, and have frequently long talks with them — they have more snap about them than our men. . . . How is my little brown horse?"

On September 4 he writes again: —

"There is no news to tell you. Of course, under such a censorship as our letters are subject to, nothing specially interesting can be told. My wants are the subject on which I shall just now dwell. You at home can ascertain whether the chances of our staying here are many or few. If we are to stay any time longer, I should like some coffee, sugar, etc., and also some more books. It might be worth while to risk sending the coffee anyway. As for books, pick me out two or three of your French books (no valuable copies) and your little black-covered fat-bellied French-English dictionary. We have here "Corinne," Molière, "Télémaque," and "Les Trois Mousquetaires." Send if possible G. Sand's — what's the name of her famous book? I leave the matter to you; pick out some 4 or 5 and send

them along. My chief need is money, of which I can get none at all. We manage to pass time pretty well now — having some 300 books in the establishment, mostly purchased here. Wrap each book in a newspaper to prevent chafing. . . . All is going on well here, as regards health and spirits. . . ."

Captain Charles Francis Adams, writing affectionately from the front to the wounded Major, continues to speak disrespectfully of his senior officers, for the "Fulmens" ("chain lightning" and "sheet lightning") of the following letter are the two brothers with whom Adams "never could get on."

CAMP OF 1ST MASS. CAV.  
SULPHUR SPS., VA., Sunday, 9 Aug. '63.

MY DEAR HENRY: —

I got yours of the 3d inst. yesterday. I was glad enough to hear that the bullet had been extracted and that you were doing well. I hope that you'll have a pleasant convalescence and enjoy all the laurels, wines, fruits, and bon-bons which, rumor tells us, await at home the battered war-worn veterans of our many fights. What you have earned — enjoy! . . . Poor Cary — our list of officers creeps up apace! — but I was glad indeed to hear that Jim got off untouched, and I hope he will soon walk free, and remember "the Libby" only as one of the follies of his youth and a place to be avoided. I look for "Rats" daily, but have not yet seen him bestridden by Jim's gallant captor.

As for us here. We are encamped just opposite to Sulphur Springs on the South bank — just where we used to look so intently for the rebel pickets. The *Fulmens* are both here, but they don't trouble me much — and I think I've run my machine too long, and through too severe times, to be continually pestered by them with efforts — first to teach me my duty, and then to enforce my performance of it, and I suspect some such idea occurs at times to even old chain lightning himself; and, as for sheet lightning, he's on his taps, and, looking for

promotion, seeks popularity; but I've yet to learn that, though the leopard may hide his spots, he does therefore change them. You ask for any further developments regarding old *fulmen primum*, or chain. There are none — he expects a brigade and a damned bad one, and I can see clearly enough has the Brig. bee in his bonnet to such a degree that he don't care a damn for the regiment — for which praise to the Lord! I heartily wish he may get it, and he has all my influence. There are few enough of us left now, for we don't boast a line officer to each company, and, of these, how few are of the desired stock! I am the only officer who, as such, has now been with the regiment in all its campaigns, marches and actions. I hold out well — am in fact sadly robust, thin and light. I have never, since I have been in the service, been nearly so well as since the middle of June. . . .

Novelists have assured us for many a century that a wounded soldier's period of convalescence is peculiarly dangerous to his heart. Henry Higginson proved to be no exception, and his engagement to Miss Ida Agassiz, in the autumn of 1863, was the greatest good fortune of his life. From boyhood he had been fond of the society of gracious and charming women, and his fiancée was an old friend, a member of that talented and happy Cambridge circle which in the eighteen-fifties and sixties gave gayety to Quincy Street.

Here lived Professor Louis Agassiz, radiant and magical. He had arrived in Cambridge in 1846, leaving his delicate, gifted wife, Cécile Braun, at Carlsruhe, with his two daughters, Pauline and Ida, and his boy, Alexander, in Neuchâtel. After the children had been left motherless in 1848, they joined their father in Cambridge. In 1850 he married Miss Elizabeth Cabot Cary, daughter of Thomas G. Cary and the granddaughter of Colonel T. Handasyd Perkins, the great China merchant, who looked — it was thought in Boston — like the Duke of Wellington.

Elizabeth Cary was born in her grandfather's stately house in Temple Place, then a secluded "court" after the pleasant Boston fashion, full of Perkinsses and Cabots and Gardiners and Carys. The transition from Temple Place to Professor Agassiz's house in Oxford Street, and then in Quincy Street, Cambridge, was an adventure in which Elizabeth Cary revealed the rarest qualities. Her "Life and Correspondence" of her famous husband, Miss Lucy A. Paton's "Elizabeth Cary Agassiz," and Mr. George R. Agassiz's "Letters and Recollections of Alexander Agassiz" are three delightful biographies, picturing the Agassiz household in its early years.

By 1863 the Quincy Street home was somewhat changed. The school for girls, begun in 1855 by Mrs. Agassiz, with the assistance of the professor and his three children, had been given up. Young Alexander Agassiz, who had been graduated from Harvard in 1855, and was helping his father in the new Museum of Comparative Zoölogy, had married Miss Anna Russell in 1860, but continued to live in his father's house. In November, 1859, likewise, his sister Pauline had married Quincy A. Shaw of Boston, and now his sister Ida was betrothed to his classmate Henry Higginson. But the Agassiz house continued to be for many a year the centre of a truly cosmopolitan culture, musical, artistic, and literary, as well as scientific. No other house in Cambridge, except Longfellow's and Charles Eliot Norton's, welcomed so many distinguished foreign guests, or was warmed by the fires of a more friendly hospitality.<sup>1</sup> It was into this home that Henry Higginson was now welcomed as a son.

Brother Jim, writing from Libby Prison on October 7, pronounced Henry's engagement "the pleasantest news one could have while spending his days in this wretched place, and good enough to make one cheerful even here."

<sup>1</sup> See President Eliot's article, "The Agassiz House in Quincy Street," in the *Harvard Alumni Bulletin* for March 29, 1917. In January of that year the house had been burned.

"Allow me to call your attention [he added in a later note] to a most beautiful passage in Schiller's 'Das Lied von der Glöcke.' After the young man has rampaged out into the world, he returns to his home, puts his *Wanderstab* in the corner, lights his pipe and ruminates — that's the commencement of the passage. The last line runs thus: 'Die schöne Zeit der jungen Liebe' — most admirable lines. Don't they meet your approval? Write to me, my boy — pity the sorrow of a jailbird."

Henry Adams's congratulations upon the engagement, written from London, were highly characteristic: —

"Let me say one word as to your announcement to me. As a general principle and in the most offensive sense of the word, I consider him who marries to be an unmitigated and immitigable ignoramus and ruffian. In your particular case, however, I incline to the opinion that there are palliating circumstances. I have not the honor of knowing Miss Agassiz, though I have an indistinct recollection of once seeing her somewhere. But I have heard a great deal about her, from an early youth, and this has induced me to believe that she is a person whom weakminded men like you and me instantaneously, profoundly and irredeemably adore. Probably I shall have some occasion to tell her so some day, if ever a misguided Providence permits me to go home. Meanwhile I only hope that your life won't be such an eternal swindle as most life is, and that, having succeeded in getting a wife so much above the common run, you will succeed in leading an existence worth having. If I knew your fiancée, I should congratulate her upon getting for a husband one of the curiously small number of men whom I ever have seen, for whom I have morally a certain degree of respect. This perhaps would n't be quite so enthusiastic praise as one might give, but it's more than I ever said of anyone else. The truth is, a good many of my acquaintances have been getting engaged lately, and I believe yours is the only case that has made me really, sincerely glad to hear about."

Charles Lowell, who was now betrothed to Josephine

("Effie") Shaw, the sister of the hero of Fort Wagner, was prompt in his felicitations. He writes in September from camp:—

"Henry, don't tell me about your being happy; wait three months; then, as you begin to see how happiness grows, you may begin to talk about it; but you won't care to talk about it then, so don't let me hear anything more from you until you can write an intelligible letter, giving me your deliberate opinion on the conduct of the war, and on the best candidate for the presidency, and on *real* things generally. . . . You've been a great deal of trouble to me for the last 25 years, Henry, a great deal of trouble. Still I should have been very willing to continue to take care of you. Life has been made such a very light burden to me lately, that I feel as if I could carry you along without much trouble. Still, old fellow, I am very, very glad, to turn you over to so much better hands. It has been a pleasant thing always to have two such good friends, and it will be a pleasanter thing to know of you now helping one another along in these uncomfortable times."

Later in that month he writes:—

"Did I tell you that I hoped to get a leave of absence some time about November 1st? . . .

"I shall ask for twenty days, and shall try to be married in the first five (one of the first five, Henry; it only takes one day), and I want you to be married on one of the other five. E. and I would so much like to be at your wedding, old fellow. . . . Of course in these times, weddings are what they should be, quiet, simple and sacred."

In October he discusses with Henry a question pertinent to each of them:—

"How could I be married without 'daily bread'? A pertinent question, Henry. There are still ravens, but it does not appear that Elijah ever taxed the powers of his by marrying. . . . I have nothing, as you know; I am going to marry upon nothing; I am going to make my wife as happy upon nothing as

if I could give her a fortune — in that I still have faith; in that one respect this war is perhaps a personal Godsend. 'Daily bread' sinks into insignificance by the side of the other more important things which the war has made uncertain; and I know now that it would be unwise to allow a possible want of 'daily bread' in the future to prevent the certainty of even a month's happiness in the present."

Colonel Lowell was married on the last day of October, and his wife joined him in camp at Vienna, Virginia. Late in November, hearing that his friends were to be married in Appleton Chapel, he sends his benedictions: —

"This is not a letter. Merely hearing how soon you are to be married, I wish to express my satisfaction and give my formal consent. . . . How old are you? To see a fellow like you, whom I've seen grow up from an infant, go and be married, makes me feel very old. I should like to shake hands with you and Mrs. H., even though I had to do it in the College Chapel. . . . You've always been a good boy and I'm fond of you."

The wedding — "quiet, simple, and sacred" — was on December 5. Major and Mrs. Higginson went first to Waltham, where Mr. Frank C. Lowell had placed his house at their disposal. They spent Christmas in the Agassiz home on Quincy Street, and after visiting for a time in Chauncy Street, returned to Cambridge, and with the coming of spring went to the Agassiz cottage at Nahant. But the Major's recovery from his wounds was very slow. He had hoped to rejoin his regiment by New Year's; but the weeks and months crept by, and he still found himself unable to sit in a saddle without great pain. The entire year of 1864, in fact, — with the exception of one stirring week before Petersburg in July, — was the too familiar story of hope deferred.

Nor was the news that reached him from the regiment calculated to increase his comfort. The letters from his fellow officers were affectionate and breezy, but it was evident that the First Massachusetts Cavalry was in a bad way. A few of these

letters must be quoted here, to show how easily a crack regiment could be demoralized by lack of confidence in its superior officers, and how swiftly the changes in the public opinion of the North affected young officers at the front.

A letter from Lieutenant-Colonel Theodore Lyman, a college classmate of Higginson's, now on Meade's staff, indicates that even in November, 1863, Major Higginson was getting worried over the question of getting his sick leave extended.

HEADQUARTERS ARMY OF POTOMAC, Nov. 2, 1863.

MY DEAR HIG:—

Your plea for the wounded hero has duly been presented at my wall tent.

I have, in an indirect and discreet manner, made enquiries; and I find that all officers who have had more than 60 days sick leave are duly reported by the Adj.-Gen'l, but they are *not reported to be mustered out*. This general order is only used to sponge off the lazy gentleman, with pains in the end of the little finger; and I was assured that the rule was never enforced in the case of any decent sort of an officer. Such are not so plenty that the department can afford to cut them out. Of course, if an officer were away 6 or 8 months, some row would be created; but even then, I fancy that, upon good reason shown, he would be held on.

I have seen your regiment once or twice, since I was here. The first time at Cedar Mt., where was Charlie Adams in a state of great despair; he had been scrimmaging the day before, and had beheld no transportation for a week. But, the next time, he had a new jacket on, and Adams was himself again! I saw Col. Sargent that same time, but he hath since departed to the warmer realms of New Orleans. Also I saw Flint — familiarly known to my college days as "Ducky." Our weather, just now, I have every reason to be satisfied with; and in consequence, the men are in great trim, so that we really feel as if (in the classic words of Gen. Buford) we ought

"to boolge in on the Rebs!" — The cavalry have of late suffered severely from hoof disease; also the artillery; but it has taken now a favorable turn, and is disappearing.

While we lay at Centreville, Lowell came over, accompanied by little Caspar Crowninshield. Both were well, and so was Willie Forbes, who looked as trained down as a boat-racer. Your chief, Gen. Gregg, I see from time to time; his eye hath not changed its blue nor his beard its length.

Gen. Pleasonton I see almost every day; I was detached on his staff, when we drove the Rebs over the Rapidan, and he treated me very handsomely.

Gen. Buford, too, comes often to headqr's. He is the prime favorite of your "cavalry bucks"; and indeed has a mighty good horse-head.

O Lord! I wish I had an honorable shot, that was n't dangerous and would take a long time to heal!

With many remembrances to Ida

Always yrs.

THEODORE LYMAN.

By January it is apparent that Captain C. F. Adams is again "in a state of great despair."

CAMP OF 1ST MASSACHUSETTS CAVALRY  
WARRENTON, VA., Jan. 5th, '64.

DEAR MAJOR: —

A long time ago, at a time when nights on duty were not wholly intolerable, I got a kind letter from you by the hand of your immanuensis [sic], now, I hear, Mrs. Major. And by the way, remember me most kindly to her, and I hope before the winter is over to pay my respects in person.

I shan't in this letter go into business or regimental details — things here are bad, very bad, and this regiment must have a head and that soon, or, it is "done gone up." It would make you weep to come down and see us now — three months of

drifting have done their work very thoroughly, and we are no more what we have been than you are yourself. I regret to say that all my fears of incompetence in those who have temporarily been in command, are more than justified — we have been drifting, drifting, drifting, running steadily down-hill for three months past. I have been, and now am, most anxious to get home to see you and Curtis about matters before it was too late, and I hope yet to do so. Meanwhile, I do not myself know what to advise; the more of an up-turning we now have, the better — and my great hope is to get the regiment home: should we do so and there reorganize, there is plenty of stuff left in the regiment down in the ranks, and there will yet be a hope for us. About the new battalion I have nothing to say — but on it I imagine our fate hinges. One thing I am clear on—it must n't be commanded by S—, unless Curtis<sup>1</sup> or yourself or Chamberlain are sure of coming back and staying with us. . . .

Within a month Adams, much broken in health, had secured leave of absence, and went for a brief visit to England. Just before sailing he sent this note to Higginson: —

BOSTON, Feby. 2nd, '64.

DEAR MAJOR: —

Enclosed you will find the paper which I discussed with you. Of course I am prepared to stand by it, but, at the same time, as you must see, it brings on the bitter issue so far as I am concerned. If it is used, S— or I must leave the regiment. I sail to-morrow and shall be gone until the whole thing is over and settled. I leave it and myself wholly in the hands of Curtis, yourself and my brother; I earnestly hope that, while you effect something, things will not eternally smash for us and the regiment. Pray do not use these papers unnecessarily and, if they must be used, I should wish S— and C— to know

<sup>1</sup> Greely Curtis had now married Miss Harriet Appleton, and was about to go abroad in search of health.

all I have written. I want to stab, if I must stab, — hard, — but not in the back. . . .<sup>1</sup>

A letter from Adams written shortly after his return continues the story: —

H.Q. CAV'Y ESCORT A. OR P.

*Monday, 2d May '64.*

DEAR MAJOR: —

Yours of the 25th reached me some days ago. I must say I read it with considerable feeling and if, as should be the case, the approbation and strong sympathy of those who, knowing best, are best able to judge, is most valuable, you have all mine. You have acted disinterestedly and generously — only as I knew you would act though. More was asked of you, and has been asked of you, throughout all this wretched business than ever should have been asked of a wounded officer, and you have always been equal to the occasion. I hope it may be some satisfaction to you to know that one person at least was up to an appreciation of such a course in another. Be assured my good word will not be wanting whenever and wherever your name may be mentioned.

As to results. I cannot regret anything that I have done, though I do wish it had not been my ill fortune to be mixed up in such a miserable personal matter. I acted for the best and according to my sense of what I ought to do for the regiment — as regardless of myself as I was of S—— or anyone else. I did n't want promotion for myself, I honestly think, but I did want to see the regiment have a head, and a sane one at that; and, if others thought that I could best meet the issue at the moment it had to be made, I did n't consider that I should allow what Mrs. Grundy would say to prevent my taking a place, which I felt someone ought to take. God knows I never wanted to interfere with you or Greely, but I

<sup>1</sup> I do not know whether "the paper" was ever presented to Governor Andrew. On his return from England in April, Adams's squadron was transferred to the Headquarters of the Army of the Potomac, and he never rejoined the old regiment.

did feel that, if the necessities of the regiment called for it, you, Greely, S—, or myself should be jumped or anything else.

For the future I am not going to express myself in any way about the regiment. When you say that "the old corps no longer exists," you don't yourself know how true your remark is. A lower-toned, more vulgar regiment than ours now is I never saw, and the deterioration since I left it in Jany. is to me amazing. The officers are such as I had never imagined that we should see, and mine here (Teague, and your old buyer Baldwin) are actually afraid to tell me of the style of conversation, manners, amusements and language indulged in in the regiment. Will Chamberlain succeed in reforming this? I don't know. . . . You must consider me a very rash or ambitious man. Meanwhile, I don't mean to commit myself to anything. I am very happy and comfortable here, and, if all goes well, will in two months have the finest squadron of cavalry in the whole Army. My men are contented and cheerful and my officers are satisfied and only grumble when they get on their wrongs in the regiment; if they send me any black-guard from the regiment I will court-martial him. I do wish I could get Jim with me, but I have no vacancy on either of my rolls; still I shall try to do something for him when I see Chamberlain.<sup>1</sup> With Chamberlain I mean to have a clear and honest understanding — I cannot and will not go back to the regiment with S— my senior, and continually likely to be in command.

Now a word or two of your future. Your treatment has been such, being jumped by Chamberlain, that I do not think you are called on either to resign or to go back to the regiment,

<sup>1</sup> Chamberlain, it will be remembered, was the former Cambridge fireman. By the time Adams wrote his *Autobiography*, he had formed a higher estimate of Chamberlain's capacity. "A large, rough, self-made man, he had been wild and adventurous in his youth, serving as a trooper in the Mexican war. Wholly lacking in refinement and education, he was a dashing fellow in his way; and on the whole, I fancy, the best officer that regiment ever had." — *Autobiography*, p. 155.

unless you choose. I would hold my rank, and if possible, get put on some staff. Could not Frank Barlow help you? Could not Major Williams? Do not however go back to the regiment. With Chamberlain in command you would not only be unhappy there, but useless. . . .

Yours etc.

CHARLES F. ADAMS, JR.

In the meantime Colonel Henry S. Russell, Higginson's former comrade in the Second Massachusetts and now organizing the Fifth Massachusetts Cavalry at Readville, was anxious to secure Major Higginson as lieutenant-colonel of the new regiment. An undated note from Readville explains the situation.

DEAR HENRY:—

Yesterday morning the Governor spoke about your regiment — saying that you wanted someone put over you in 1st Cavalry; and represented that Major Chamberlain would be acceptable to all in the regiment, as he would, I suppose, from all accounts. The Governor asked me whom I should like for Lt. Col., and I said you; he said that, if you could not take the field with the 1st, you probably could not with the 5th, and spoke of Charley Adams as a good person for it. I told him I liked Adams, but was sorry about you. Now, Henry, I should prefer you to anybody else and I wish you would at once take steps about it; what kind of position can we take to oppose the Governor's theory that, if you are not well enough for one, you are not for the other? I am sincere in what I say; I would rather be without any Lt. Col. for many months, if I can have you in the end. I shall write to the Governor to-night and tell him more strongly how I feel; but I hope you will post me in the facts as to your health.

Love to Ida.

Sincerely,

H. S. R.

A second note from Colonel Russell followed on May 5:—

DEAR HENRY:—

Whatever the Governor does about the Lt. Col. of 5th Cav., I know that he is actuated by his desire to help the regiment in this hour of trial; I wish you were ready for work, for then there would be no hesitation.

1st battalion (mounted) left this morning, 2nd goes to-morrow probably, and 3rd on Sunday.

Very sincerely

H. S. RUSSELL.

Why won't you call on the Governor at once? H.

While Major Higginson was hesitating, and daily trying his strength in the saddle, the indications of dissatisfaction in the First Cavalry were accumulating. "I feel as if I had been treated like a dog," writes Captain Pelham Curtis. "I wish you were here to take command." Captain Channing Clapp, whose promotion to the lieutenant-colonelcy was being urged by Higginson, writes that he thinks both Higginson's and Adams's claims to promotion are greater than his own. Finally Chamberlain got the promotion. Channing Clapp writes:—

"... You are right about its not being the same Regt. as formerly. Ned Dalton, who is now Medical Director of the A.O.P., spent several nights with me lately and he told a pitiful story of the condition of things — he had just inspected it and noticed the great difference at once without speaking of it first. Motley and Adams are both trying to get out — and Adams would not have gone back had his squadron not been detached. . . ."

The Campaign of the Wilderness was now opening, and Major Higginson, though able to ride only a few miles at a walk, could not be kept from the front any longer. "A staff appointment is pretty," Greely Curtis writes from Paris, "and,

the war lasting, I intend to try for one. So had you." Adams, too, had written: "Could not Frank Barlow help you?" And it was "Frank Barlow" of Cambridge, the brilliant scholar of Harvard '55, who had enlisted as a private and was now a brigadier-general in the Second Corps, who gave him his chance. There is a grim note of dissuasion from Henry R. Dalton, penciled hastily from the battlefield of Cold Harbor: —

HQRS. 1ST DIV. 6 CORPS, *June 6, 1864.*  
COAL [sic] HARBOR, VA.

MY DEAR MAJOR: —

Your kind note of the 24th May I received yesterday. I am afraid I can give you no encouragement hereabouts, at present anyhow, for we are mixed up very much. . . . I can hardly write more now, as we are lying in line of battle within 100 yards of the enemy, and liable any instant to open or be opened upon.

Good luck to you and yours. I advise you not to hurry back here. Sincerely,

HENRY R. DALTON.

But at last came the cheery summons from his classmate, telling of the staff appointment: —

HQRS. 1ST DIV., 2ND CORPS,  
*July 4th, 1864.*

MY DEAR MAJOR: —

Your note and the order of the War Dept. came to-day.

Come on. I shall be glad to see you.

I have just had a pleasant talk with Henry Dalton, who is about the only savory morsel I see.

Theodore came over yesterday conducting a new lamb (one Sedgwick<sup>1</sup>) to the slaughter, *i.e.*, the 20th Mass. Vols.

Truly in haste, F. C. B.

<sup>1</sup> Lieutenant Arthur G. Sedgwick, of Stockbridge.

Two days later, the invalid Major started South. Mrs. Higginson accompanied him as far as New York, and in Philadelphia he rested with his old friend John W. Field. Early's cavalry was making its well-nigh successful raid on Washington, and the railroad was cut both north and south of Baltimore. He managed to reach Baltimore on July 12, and offered his services to General Ord in reorganizing the stragglers from the Union army. But by the 14th he was in Washington, and found his servant Spencer waiting for him with his favorite horse, "Piggy."

The enemy could easily have taken the city either Sunday or Monday [he wrote to his wife], but say nothing of this. . . . Now I am going to the Armory Square Hospital, waiting for Anna Lowell. An umbrella marked J. S., a very pretty hat of brown and white mixed straw trimmed with a brown ribbon and a little black net veil about it, is lying on the bookcase near by and indicates that Effie<sup>1</sup> is here, though not in the ward this minute. Everything looks as nice as possible — each bed covered with a high net to keep off the flies — a few books are on the bookcase and remind me that I might have sent some of our useless — I mean to say "unused" — books to this hospital. The men look as comfortable as possible under the circumstances, but it is bad at best. . . .

On the 18th he started by steamer down the Potomac, passing at night Point Lookout, where his brother Frank was stationed, and hoping to meet at City Point his brother James, who had been exchanged from Libby Prison, and was now with Adams's squadron at the Headquarters of the Army of the Potomac. At City Point he was welcomed by his classmate Dr. Edward B. Dalton,<sup>2</sup> who had been selected by Grant to

<sup>1</sup> Josephine Shaw Lowell, wife of Colonel C. R. Lowell, who was now in pursuit of Early's retreating cavalry, and "winning golden opinions from everybody."

<sup>2</sup> Dalton's name is on the Soldiers Field monument erected by Major Higginson, together with the names of James Savage, C. R. Lowell, S. G. Perkins, J. J. Lowell, and R. G. Shaw.

take charge of the great camp of 10,000 sick and wounded men.

"Barlow, Channing Clapp, and Charles Adams all dined here," the Major writes on July 21, "and were very pleasant indeed. I go to Barlow this morning and shall then see how much I can do. He has been made by Dalton fully to understand how little can be expected of me."

On July 22 he quotes Dr. Dalton's professional opinion:—

I should tell you of Ned Dalton's opinion about my undertaking to serve at all. He considers that the abscess was a very serious matter and that it may on a slight provocation return, its track having been already plainly marked out. An abscess of this kind is very difficult to stop, and is very wasting to the patient, leaving often the tissues destroyed or injured. He thinks me very unwise even to try the experiment, as it is impossible to ascertain the limit of my capacity to do and to bear, until the mischief is done. There is the opinion of a truly conscientious and able surgeon, the man whom I should trust above them all. I told him that I would go to Barlow and try very gently for a short time. . . . Jimmy is not looking well at all nor feeling well; not a bit better than when at home.

A few lines from the Major's daily letters follow.

*July 23. CAMP NEAR PETERSBURG.*

What we are to do here, no one knows, but I have great faith in our general. We were ordered out this morning at 4½ o'clock on fatigue work, *i.e.* digging, and stayed until dark.

. . . So I arose, drank a cup of tea, ate a cracker or two on the way out, and thus began a tiresome day cheerlessly enough. We rode about the works with the General, and then lay off in the woods, occasionally taking a look at the progress made by our men. We also went up outside our lines and looked for a few minutes at the rebel lines, they being about a quarter of a

mile from us. Their works are very strong and so are ours — the pickets lie outside, behind low breastworks of logs and earth. More to-morrow of this. It is my first day's work and a very easy one, but I am pretty tired to-night. I am not the tough fellow that I was. . . .

*July 24, Sunday.*

We started from camp at 4½ o'clock A.M., and came back at 7½ o'clock P.M. It was a tedious day. We lay off and rode around the works alternately. . . . Riding back, I overtook General Meade and that French officer, Theodore Lyman and a couple of the staff being behind them. I rode with Theodore a short distance and had a nice little chat with him. . . . Of General Meade I got little idea, as he hardly turned round; he commands the respect of his men and of his officers in this army far more than its former commanders, I fancy. He himself has moved, and has fought his four corps, the 2d, 5th, 6th, and 9th throughout the campaign, and has done it admirably. He is said to be very irascible and often cross with his staff. General Grant has his headquarters near City Point, as Genl. Butler's command, the 10th, 18th, and 19th Corps are nearer that point. There is a good deal of mystery about internal matters generally. Peace reigns between Grant and Meade, but no one knows farther. Butler was to have been ordered away at one time, but he is still here. He and Smith did not pull together, I suppose. If anyone interferes with General Grant, I wish and believe that he would crush him. . . . Barlow has told me a good deal of his ideas about managing men and about the merits and success of officers — general officers, especially. He lives with his division, goes to a piece of work or to a fight with them — sees that they have nice, clean, uniform camps, that they are well cared for, that they are well placed and advantageously moved in a fight. In short he minds his work thoro'ly, and this he considers the secret of success, common sense being granted. There is a General Miles whom he selected as his Lieut.-Colonel long

since, and who has been promoted this summer. He is, in Barlow's opinion, one of the best generals whom he knows. Miles is a young man, rather uneducated and formerly a shop-boy in a crockeryware shop in Boston. He has a good deal of character, as one sees from his face, and is very soldierly and very brave. This, united with energy and with common sense sharpened by experience in this line, has given him his brigade.

No great mental powers are needed to manœuvre a brigade of infantry (of not more than 1500 men) when in plain sight. The difficulty of the problem increases as the numbers increase, and therefore it happens that many a man can handle a brigade admirably, who can do nothing with a corps or even a division. Barlow was telling me the other day what geese we fellows were to go into a regiment so well-officered as our best Mass. regiments (more especially into a mounted regiment), if we expected any promotion. . . . Certainly the young men whom we have known at home had more ability and more character than those one often meets here — and they were and are much more conscientious in the performance of their duties. We all should have gained in rank, and lost in pleasant companionship and associations by following Barlow's example. . . .

My bay horse can carry me more miles than I can ride, the beggar. He is about the best horse that I ever saw, so kind, so strong, so fast, so courageous, so enduring, I am delighted with him, and hope to take him home with me whenever that may be. It is raining hard, and to-morrow will see us busily engaged digging, I fear. My back aches to-night — confound it! I have been reading the "Acts" this afternoon, and thinking of you all.

*July 25.*

General Burnside does not seem to stand very high with this army. He is a good man, but not great. Sedgwick was the best corps commander ever in this army, I fancy; and now we have lost McPherson, one of the very ablest men in the western

army. . . . I have been reading Shakespeare's Henry VI, 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>d</sup> parts, and was shocked to find what vulgar nonsense he has written about Joan of Arc. It is too bad, and I have always been inclined to adore her. But he depicts very well Henry VI's weakness and goodness, as well as the vicious character of his Queen Margaret. My chief knowledge of English history comes from Shakespeare; but as great works these parts of Henry VI seem to me inferior to many of the historical plays. . . . Do you know that I found Effie had read Mill's "Political Economy" three times this winter?

These people near Washington get very tired indeed of the war; it seems to them endless. That peace conference at Niagara Falls is a strange affair; we can have no peace until they are willing to yield the question of slavery entirely. I think that both parties would feel better if we took Richmond and Atlanta before a peace. But any compromise would be horrid; and I don't believe that the President will think of any.

The enemy have just begun their evening salute; they usually fire a few shells at us, and we return the compliment about 6 P.M.

*July 28. NORTH SIDE OF THE JAMES.*

I had just begun this date when the General<sup>1</sup> sent for me, and told me that his wife was dead. She has been quite ill, but he had been informed not dangerously so — very likely with truth. Not improbably it was a sudden turn in the disease. He applied immediately for leave to go to Washington (where she died), but was refused it, altho' General Hancock endorsed it. So he was forced to return to his command and has been at work all day. He was very sad indeed about it, broke down utterly this morning. Poor fellow! it is a dreadful blow to him, — for he and his wife were evidently wrapped up in each other, — and totally unexpected. He intended to take me with him. We are in the midst of a movement and the commanding officer decided that the leave could not be granted

<sup>1</sup> Barlow.

to-day. Possibly it may be granted to-morrow, in which case I may or may not go with him.

We left our camp at 4 o'clk P.M. Tuesday and marched until 3 o'clk A.M. over the James River. There we rested until 4 o'clk, when we got into position and soon after attacked the enemy with a skirmish line, which took a line of pits and four guns and caissons to match. It was very suddenly and well done. Then we advanced and accomplished nothing all day long. There was firing along the skirmish line all day long and to-day it is the same thing, but except a little cavalry fight in which our cavalry whipped the rebel infantry, taking 200 to 300 prisoners, there is nothing done. I saw Arthur Sedgwick tramping along with his regiment as they went to the front, and shook hands with him. He looked well tho' weary. Subsequently the 20th went out to the skirmish line, and is out a few hundred yards from us popping away at the rebels. . . . It is now five o'clk, and we are about to fall back, I believe. Whatever was intended, nothing of moment has been accomplished. You never saw anything like the delays and the slowness of movements. It is disheartening. Perhaps we have accomplished our work in making a way for the cavalry to get out on some errand. We do get so tired and so aching.

The next day General Barlow was granted fifteen days' leave, and as he could not bear to be alone, he begged Major Higginson to return to Boston with him. Thus they missed the spectacular but futile explosion of the Petersburg mine on July 30.

By August 4 Higginson was back in Washington, but it was only too plain that he himself was unfit for further active service. He turned wearily homeward with his brother James and resigned from the army.<sup>1</sup> "Perhaps by Saturday," he

<sup>1</sup> He had been only six days at the actual front. Yet, when he received the grade of Brevet Lieutenant-Colonel, U.S.A., on March 13, 1865, it was "for gallant and meritorious service during the war, and especially in the campaign of 1864 of the Army of the Potomac."

writes his wife on August 11, "I shall drop my buttons and appear in black and gray."

Black and gray enough was the mood of the North in that midsummer of 1864. Grant's campaign against Petersburg had failed. Sherman, with the Western Army, had marched off toward the southeast, no one knew whither. Peace talk was heard everywhere. "Mr. Lincoln is already beaten," wrote Horace Greeley on August 18; and the platform of the Democratic Convention, eleven days later, contained the famous phrase "after four years of failure."

Greely Curtis had written from Paris in June:—

" . . . I should like very much to know what you (or any other man whom *I know*) think of passing events and to what tending. We always receive such distorted news at first through the telegraph that one never can believe it. The telegrams to the London 'Times' I hope will be collected and published after the war as representing the sort of news the 'Times' readers like to have put before them. I have got tired of going up to the banker's and trying to keep lily-livered men from believing everything is for the bad. We all go there to get the first telegraphic news, and as they come in there is a deal of croaking. There is one to-day saying that Grant attacked on the 18th (of May) — a general assault, entirely repulsed, after many hours hard fighting, loss 1200 killed and wounded. It is vain to tell the sapheads that after a *general* assault and many hours hard fighting the loss would be counted in thousands not in hundreds. No, the 'Times' says we have been licked, etc., etc.

"As for me myself I don't know exactly what to think. I fully believe in the justice of our cause and yet I do not feel confident that, as the main rascality Slavery has been overthrown, we of the North will be permitted to conquer the South and hold it. Don't jump up and say I'm a croaker like the rest. I have never permitted that idea to leave my pen or lips before, but of late I have been thinking that, as in all great

national convulsions, after the great cause is removed, by unforeseen ways generally, the struggle is over. So now I should not find it hard to believe that with the death of Slavery our work is finished. I do not think it would be wise to give up at the end of this campaign, if unsuccessful, but I am afraid the people will. At any rate we can form some opinion about it when the draft is put in operation. . . . I am in strong hopes however that Grant is to be successful and that these are but the dying flurries of the Confederacy — of course it must die hard."

Writing again on July 21 from Lucerne, Colonel Curtis makes some vigorous remarks about Boston copperheads:

"I get very mad with the traitors who live in security in Boston and elsewhere and who really kill more men in the front than the same number of graybacks do. I really am getting to believe that a little powder burned in Boston and New York would be the most economical expenditure — that is to say, when a damned scoundrel talks his treason, let some American treat him as an enemy deserves to be treated in time of war. Could n't the healthy practice of shooting be brought a little distance to the rear?

"The idea has been growing in my mind that if a club of young men could be found whose object would be to stamp out such rascals as X—— and Co. it would be good — to make social treason dangerous, to taboo men in business and every way who are really cutting our throats. When such fellows as Y—— (why did he ever disgrace our flag and us by prating at Brook Farm), when fellows of that kidney maunder about the liberty of speech, let them know it has its responsibilities, and if they don't choose to incur the one they must n't indulge the other. I remember a small case in point in my own experience, but I think the rule holds good anywhere. A fellow said something about me which was libelous. I spoke mildly to him and asked him what he meant. He was a modern stickler for liberty (of speech), and said that he had a right to say what he chose. I assented and added that he had also the right to take a

flogging for saying it — which he at once got. Now that is exactly what I wish to see inaugurated in Boston. Let men pay for their antagonism to the country. I believe in the French revolution of '92. I accept all its hangings, drownings, guillotinings, and everything else. Of course it was dreadful, but then you can't *play* at revolution, and it resulted in the happiness of 20 millions instead of their previous utter and starving misery. Those men meant to be fair and were straining every nerve to fight foreign enemies. The bloody manner in which they disposed of domestic treason was most thorough. To be suspected of treason was death. Now I say that is just right. I would n't have said it two years ago, but I think so now. What is done in Boston to the man who talks open treason? He is *called* a copperhead and that is all. Men dine with him, trade with him, are friends with him. He should be at least tabooed, horsewhipped or shot in duel. . . ."

Nor was the news from Major Higginson's former regiment calculated to raise his spirits. Colonel Chamberlain writes him early in September:—

"Our reg. have present for duty over four hundred men, and only *four line* officers, and they 2nd Lieutenants, sadly demoralize.<sup>1</sup> . . . The last month campaign exceeds in severity all the previous ones, and we must have rest. . . . I cannot imagine what has come over the North, what has brought about this strong apathy and criminal carelessness about filling up the Army. We want men, not a lot of sickly Boys and cripples, where is all of the boasted patriotism of Massachusetts, gone too, to have her send agents to collect such scum and trash, that has been sent us of late. They are a source of weakness, instead of strength to the cause. But avoid the draft by all means, let the Army, the South, all go to the devil, but stave off the draft by all that is patriotic. How cheering it is to the men here, to see that all the north seems to care about, is to prevent the draft. Forty or fifty thousand men, added to

<sup>1</sup>The Colonel's spelling and punctuation have been loyally followed.

this army would use up Bob Lee, Richmond and Co before another month, and we, that would be left, could eat our Thanksgiven dinner at home. But I don't believe this will be, and we must make up our minds for winter Quarters, south of the James. Yet I feel hopefull, and cannot believe that all this blood has been shed for nothing, the North will yet arouse. We are digging for safety. *Earley* is our front, and spades are trumps again. . . . I wish to see this fight out or I would resign, for the Cav. Corps is no place for a soldier or any one who keeps discipline. . . ."

And then, just when the sky seemed blackest, Sherman's victorious telegram from Atlanta cleared the air. The last fort in Mobile Bay surrendered to Farragut. "Sherman and Farragut have knocked the bottom out of the Chicago nominations," said Seward on September 14; and within a week came the victories of Sheridan at Winchester and Fisher's Hill. "Three cheers for Sherman!" wrote Greely Curtis from Montreux. "I got hold of the new 'Galignani' containing the Atlanta news, and that was consolation for all disappointments. As Robert Williams might say, 'I felt like I was drunk.' "

But in that jubilant October Henry Higginson was once more bereaved of a friend, and this time it was the closest friend of all, Charles Lowell. Colonel Lowell fell at Cedar Creek, on the 19th, charging at the head of his brigade, holding back the Confederate cavalry while Sheridan was galloping up from Winchester. Thirteen horses had been shot under him in that Valley campaign. "I have no idea that I shall be hit," he had just written to his wife, "but I *want* so much not to now, that it sometimes frightens me."

Greely Curtis, it seems, had a premonition of what was coming.

"I know well enough when thinking quietly about it [he wrote Higginson] that no good fellow lives or dies fruitlessly; but the cowardly selfishness of these peace men comes out in such strong contrast to the gallantry and truth of Jim Savage,

Bob Shaw, Charley Lowell and the others that I feel heartsick. . . . It was rather curious that after the news of Sheridan's defeat and victory had reached us by telegraph, without any details, I felt sure that Charley Lowell was killed — owing doubtless to your having mentioned that he had 4 horses shot under him in previous fights. I felt so certain of it that I examined the subsequent lists with a view to his name only, and on not finding it, said, 'Thank God it is n't there'; but in the next paragraph found it mentioned by itself."

"I do not think there was a quality," said Sheridan, "which I could have added to Lowell. He was the perfection of a man and a soldier." He was buried on October 28, from Appleton Chapel. "I remember," writes Edward Waldo Emerson, "one rainy day when the sudden gusts blew the yellow leaves in showers from the College elms, hearing the beautiful notes of Pleyel's Hymn, which was the tune to which soldiers were borne to burial, played by the band as the procession came, bearing Charles Lowell's body from his mother's house to the College Chapel; and seeing the coffin, wrapped in the flag, carried to the altar by soldiers; and how strangely in contrast with the new blue overcoats and fresh white and red bunting were the campaign-soiled cap and gauntlets, the worn hilt and battered scabbard of the sword that lay on the coffin.<sup>1</sup> . . .

Henry Higginson, "in black and gray," was one of the pall-bearers; and in the fifty-five years that were to pass before he himself should be borne from Appleton Chapel to Mt. Auburn, there was scarcely a day, I believe, in which he was not thinking of his friend. Lowell's last letter to him, written on September 10, is essential to an understanding of the controlling motive of Higginson's later life: —

" . . . I felt very sorry, old fellow, at your being finally obliged to give up, for I know you would have liked to see it out; however, there is work enough for a public-spirited cove everywhere. Labor for recruits and for Linkum, and you will

<sup>1</sup> *Life and Letters of Charles Russell Lowell*, p. 68.

do more than by sabring six Confederates. How do you earn your bread nowadays; or, if you are not earning it, how do you manage to pay for it? . . . I hope, Mr. Higginson, that you are going to live like a plain Republican, mindful of the beauty and the duty of simplicity. Nothing fancy now, Sir, if you please. It's disreputable to spend money, when the Government is so hard up, and when there are so many poor officers. I hope you have outgrown all foolish ambitions and are now content to become a 'useful citizen.' . . . Don't grow rich; if you once begin, you will find it much more difficult to be a useful citizen. The useful citizen is a mighty unpretending hero. But we are not going to have any country very long unless such heroism is developed.

"There! what a stale sermon I'm preaching; but being a soldier, it *does* seem to me that I should like nothing else so well as being a useful citizen. . . . By Jove! what I have wasted through crude and stupid theories. I wish old Stephen were alive. I should like to poke fingers through his theories and have him poke through mine. How I do envy (or rather *admire*) the young fellows who have something to do now without theories, and do it. I believe I have lost *all* my ambitions, old fellow. . . . I don't think I would turn my hand to be a distinguished chemist or a famous mathematician. *All* I now care about is to be a useful citizen, with money enough to buy my bread and firewood and to teach my children how to ride on horseback and look strangers in the face, especially Southern strangers. . . . I wonder whether I shall ever see you again.<sup>1</sup> . . ."

Lincoln's reëlection on November 8 meant that the war would be fought out. Army men knew it. Theodore Lyman wrote, on November 10, to Higginson: "To-night we have positive news of Lincoln's reëlection. I am glad of it — not that I like him — nor that I dislike McClellan — but Mac had

<sup>1</sup> Emerson, *op. cit.*, p. 340.

a lot of peace men about him, and that spoiled the thing." And Captain F. L. Higginson of the Fifth Cavalry wrote a curious detail: "On the day we heard of the result of the election a salute was fired in honor of Lincoln by a Wisconsin battery that voted almost unanimously for McClellan, and a flag-staff and flag was raised by rebel prisoners in a fort *built* by rebel prisoners. Rather funny, was n't it?"

Within a week after the election Henry Higginson, obstinately reckless of himself as ever, wrote to C. E. Perkins, Lowell's young associate on the Burlington R.R., that he was impatient to take the field again. But he got little encouragement from those who knew his physical condition. Curtis wrote sensibly from Paris:—

" . . . Let me urge on you the absolute need of perfect rest. Just remember that the year's work of a  $\frac{1}{2}$  sick man is n't  $\frac{1}{2}$  the work of a well man and that it is the truest economy to get well first and foremost. This is intended as a lecture, for in your last letter you gave me the idea that you were disheartened with doing nothing, 'that it was n't the way to earn one's bread.' It *is* the way to do just that thing. I am entirely convinced of it. To be egotistical and refer again to myself as an example, let me say that if, from Jan. 1863 to May 1st, 1863, I had been simply idling and amusing myself at home, I should have been a well man, and fit to have done good wholesome service from May out (barring the accidents which occur at Aldie and such). You and I thought that we had got away from South Carolina scot free. I doubt much if we did, and at any rate the wear and tear of rough life and all weathers told on our fragile forms. So *keep quiet* as a money-making pursuit and in future we 'll do great things. . . ."

Captain James J. Higginson of the First Cavalry was equally explicit.

" . . . I am sorry to see that you are allowing various plans for reëntering the service to occupy your attention seriously. It seems to me you make a great mistake in so doing. The

most foolish thing that you have done for years past was returning to the army last July, and the fortnight you were here did you harm. Why will you be so unwise as to repeat the error? There is no call upon you to reenter the service. The Government has more officers now than it needs. It is a mistaken notion that *duty* calls you back to the service. It does n't. It bids you remain where you are and try not to be restless. . . .

"[P.S., in pencil] . . . The more I think of yr. plan, the more impracticable it seems to me. Pray give it up like a sensible fellow and rest on your laurels."

And Colonel Charles F. Adams, kind and brusque as ever, volunteers his opinion: —

". . . It surprises me that you yet hanker after the tented field. If you return to it now, it will only set you so much further back in the world, for I presume you've got some day to find an occupation whereby to keep wolf from your door, and one would think that a year or two of application to some calling now would not be thrown away. As to a sense of duty on your part — a man who has your scars to show, and who has married a wife, is not in my opinion called on to resume the cudgels, at any rate in the present aspect of the race. I say unto thee — settle down! — and turn thy hand to honest toil, and, having given hostages to fortune, don't waste any more time in aimless pursuits. All of which excellent advice is given gratuitously, and you need n't mind paying me, for I shan't send in any bill.

"Col. Russell and his wife are well and domestically contented. I have fallen into the most matrimonial crowd here it was ever my fortune to encounter. Our officers marry right and left and every second Lieut. in the regiment either has, or is about to have, his wife in camp. I grimly refrain from disapprobation, but keep up a powerful thinking. Wives are all very well, and I wish I had two or three myself, but not in camp — not in camp. A camp should be nomadic — it should

never take root. A lady living in camp is in contravention of the natural fitness of things.

"Your brother Frank appears to be very well. I like him very much — have taken quite a fancy to him. He is an excellent captain and does his work so much more thoroughly and conscientiously than I ever did that I feel it is not for me to ever find fault with him. In fact, their officers get out of these darkies an amount and quality of work which would put to the blush the highest flights of our imagination in the best days of the old regiment. . . ."

But it was by no means easy to discover the way to that "honest toil" of which Adams wrote so gayly. Higginson, discouraged from reënlisting, tried again and again, as the autumn turned to winter, to find work in Boston. He was thirty. His letter to his brother James on December 6 breathes bitterness — and contempt for profiteers: —

. . . I am still prospecting, and shall continue until something good offers. It is not easy work, and very few people help. Edward Atkinson has taken some pains and has been very kind; Charles Dalton is as good as ever. I often wish to be in service once more, but am not yet well enough for the field. Do not expect that any one beside your father will help you here, and then you will not be disappointed. The list of incomes for last year over \$25,000 has just been published, and gives one a start. These people have been reaping this harvest, while we have defended them, but few remember it. Think of \$365,000 (A),<sup>1</sup> \$188,000 (B), \$150,000 (C), \$160,000 (D), \$70,000 (E), and lots more of them. (F) \$39,000, the heirs of (G) \$170,000 income. They are raising \$10,000 for G—W—'s mother and sister; *one* of these men had better give it. However, no decent man would change places to-day with (H) or with many others. . . .

<sup>1</sup> The names mentioned in this letter — represented here by A, B, C, etc. — are those of prominent Boston families.

At last a chance for work came, in the oil-fields of Southern Ohio. It was only an experiment, like so many other efforts in Henry Higginson's long endeavor to find his true calling. Some incidents of his life in Ohio will be sketched in the next chapter. It will be sufficient now if we think of him in the mire of the oil-fields from January to July, 1865, — at first alone and then in company with his wife, — while his brothers, with the Army of the Potomac, were closing in upon Richmond, and Sherman was marching northwards, and Lee surrendering at Appomattox. In that Ohio wilderness Lincoln's assassination was for days an unproved rumor, and the Grand Review of the Army of the Potomac in Washington was as distant and unreal as the pageantry of a dream. The era of the Civil War closed for Higginson, not in battle or triumphal march, but to the slow dirge music of Commemoration Day at Harvard, on July 21, 1865.

He had returned to Cambridge with his wife, and he marched on that July morning, in the halting procession of veterans, from old Gore Hall through the Yard to the Unitarian meeting-house. Colonel Henry Lee was marshal. Major Higginson walked with his classmate Hosmer, and heard the thunders of applause that greeted Major-Generals Barlow and Bartlett. There was an address and music, and the prayer by Phillips Brooks, unreported as to its words, but even now the most living memory of that noble day, the "matchless prayer of resignation and of triumph."<sup>1</sup> After the luncheon in Harvard Hall there were the exercises under the pavilion by the Tree in the Yard: speeches by Ralph Waldo Emerson, Governor Andrew, General Devens, General Meade, and Colonel Henry Russell; poems by Holmes and Julia Ward Howe (this latter read by Charles W. Eliot), and an attempted speech by General Bartlett, to whom Colonel Henry Lee, the presiding officer, made his famous comforting *bon mot* — "As Congress said

<sup>1</sup> William Garrott Brown, "The Great Occasions of an American University," in *The Foe of Compromise*, N.Y., 1903.

to Washington, ‘Sit down, sir, sit down. Your modesty is equal to your valor.’” And there was Lowell’s “Commemoration Ode,” not impressive to most hearers as delivered, and without the superb stanzas on Lincoln which were subsequently added. But on that day, as Colonel Lee said long afterwards, all words, except the prayer of Phillips Brooks, seemed powerless to convey what was felt.

When Major Higginson took off his army uniform that night, the epoch of his youth was over.

## CHAPTER VIII

### OIL AND COTTON

The pain was great when the strings were being tuned,  
My Master.

— RABINDRANATH TAGORE.

IT is clear enough now that the impression made by Henry Higginson upon his generation was not due to his success in any particular calling. It was due to a unique character, to certain ideals of conduct steadily pursued through a long series of disappointments and failures in discovering a career. Nothing was really wasted in those wanderings in Europe, in the futile efforts to become a musician, in the gallant endeavor to render efficient service in the War. He had proved to be a brave and capable officer, like many of his intimate friends; but in all that group, with the possible exceptions of Lowell and Barlow, there was little of the indefinable gift which is known as military genius. Nor did Higginson possess, like his friends of a later period, Andrew Carnegie and J. P. Morgan, a born genius for affairs. Even after he became a successful banker, there were always plenty of men in State Street who were ready with the opinion that he had no special talent for finance. His success was owing, they thought, to his honesty, his courage, his fortunate association with other men, his "luck." I have heard him say more than once: "Men often speak of me as successful in business, but I have guessed wrong more often than I have guessed right."

The story of the three years between January, 1865, and January, 1868, — when he joined the firm of Lee, Higginson and Co., — is chiefly a story of two wrong guesses. One of them has to do with oil and one with cotton. Each of these experiments left him even poorer than before in pocket, but

each was rich in picturesque experience, in fresh contacts with men and with economic forces, and in self-discipline. He had to take, between thirty-one and thirty-four, some very hard hammering; and the resilience of boyhood was no longer his. But he showed certain qualities even more valuable than resilience: namely, endurance, patience, humor, and good-will. Recognized victory came to him tardily; but not to know when you are beaten is already victory under another and perhaps a finer form.

In the winter of 1864-'65 Boston had one of the first of its recurrent fevers for speculation in oil. The discovery of petroleum in Pennsylvania and Ohio filled the sky with rainbows. No one in Boston knew anything about oil, but everybody bought oil stocks. A few highly respectable gentlemen, headed by William Sheafe, Dr. J. B. Upham, and Mr. George P. Upham, organized the Buckeye Oil Company, to develop the hidden resources of the Duck Creek district near Caldwell, Ohio, some twenty-five miles north of Marietta. They raised \$25,000, and engaged Major Higginson to go out as their agent, on a salary, to begin with, of \$8.25 a day.

His ignorance of his duties was absolute. Stopping in Philadelphia to investigate some new pumping devices, and in Pittsburgh to bargain for tanks and barrels, he found himself at the end of January in the tumbled little hills along Duck Creek, many miles from the railroad. The nearest post-offices were at Olive and Caldwell; the nearest market for oil, if oil should be found, was a dozen miles away, over clay roads impassable in winter. The Buckeye Company had bought a farm or two, and had leases of others. Rival companies had begun work along the Creek, and the natives of the region — "greedy, ugly and dirty" and Secessionist in their sympathies — were selling their farms as fast as possible, and moving on.

The Buckeye Company did not own even a horse. Pumping machinery and tanks were coming down the Ohio from

Pittsburgh by the Zanesville — Pittsburgh Weekly Packet — “the good Steam Boat Emma Graham.” (The Major kept those old bills of lading all his life.) Teams had to be hired to haul machinery, coal was needed for the pumps and lumber for the buildings, and for weeks neither coal nor lumber nor horses were to be had. The Major, quartered in a rude boarding-house, where he had to share his room at times with three other men, bargained and persuaded and tramped through the mire, — sometimes twelve miles at a stretch, — until he brought something like order out of chaos. He bought horses, built a sawmill, contracted for coal, hired men at \$5 a day, and by the middle of February, “comfortless, dirty and lonely” though he was, he was able to report that “things are moving.” One of his wells struck a little oil, and oil, if it could be tanked, barreled and hauled to market, was worth \$15 a barrel. Rainbows and pots of gold!

But accounts bothered him, as always. He writes naïvely to his father: “I’ve a simple account book for the Company. In what form should I keep my account? *Which side is Dr. and which Cr.?*” George Higginson could answer that question very easily indeed! But if the son was not much of an arithmetician, he had some shrewd notions as to geology, and submitted to his father-in-law, Professor Louis Agassiz, some questions about sinking wells, not in the bottom lands as was customary, but up among the folds of the hills. Agassiz, who was just starting on his expedition to Brazil, confirmed Higginson’s opinion, but the trustees of the Buckeye Company were suspicious of scientific experts. “All of our Trustees,” wrote Mr. Sheafe from Boston, “are not of the opinion that scientific men know more about where and how to sink wells than other people.” Divining-rods, it may be added, were still in favor along Duck Creek.

The problems of organization likewise worried the agent, and he corresponded about them with Alexander Agassiz, who was just at that time absenting himself from the Museum of

Comparative Zoölogy in order to develop some oil properties in Pennsylvania. The younger Agassiz was getting ready for his Calumet and Hecla experience, though he did not know it. He gave his brother-in-law some good advice, but it was clear that a proper organization of the Buckeye interests was impossible without additional capital and a freer hand for the agent. "Once opposite to a man, I can make him say 'Yes' or 'No,'" wrote Higginson to his wife; but the Trustees of the Buckeye Company would say neither "Yes" nor "No" in response to his letters and telegrams. Everything of importance had to be referred to them; and receiving plenty of drafts drawn by H. L. Higginson, and no returns whatever from the sale of oil, they began to write of "the want of funds and perhaps of faith from here."

This was in the middle of March, "a horrid month" for the Major. The saw-mill broke down, and the pumps were working badly. The natives of Duck Creek refused to labor in bad weather. Higginson's wounds troubled him: "I get so weary and ache so that I drag along sometimes, longing to sit or lie down." But he stuck grimly to his task and hoped for better weather. "As soon as the roads are pretty dry, teamsters enough will come in from the country around here and will reduce the price by the competition (see Mill's 'Prin. Pol. Econ.')." His letters to his wife during this period say little about the war; but he was sure that slavery at least was ended.

Now we stand fair with all the world and have wiped away this stain of inheritance forever and ever. The theory of the nation has become its practice. I was thinking about it yesterday as I climbed over the hills covered with snow, jumped over fences and brooks. The evening clouds were splendid, too, leaden color and purple in the west with a streak or two of orange where the light broke thro', and overhead white and lilac with broad patches of blue sky, like skies in some of Rubens's and some of Ruysdael's landscapes.

He had a room to himself now, "where I can read my Testament in peace." He was reading Browning, too, and found time to discuss the stories of Henry James. "Harry James's story sounds interesting enough, but the conclusion will show him up. There is no lack of talent in that family." William James, as it appears from the correspondence, had been holding high debate with Mrs. Higginson about artistic greatness: what constitutes it?

I am glad [wrote the weary Agent of the Buckeye Company] that Willy James was so pleasant and talked so well. How can I tell what makes the artist great or greater than his neighbor? . . . Beethoven seems to have mastered his art, and yet he doubtless had something to learn and left unsaid much in his own spirit. He has shown us as many sides (in that art) as any artist in any art, has not he? It is strange that he, of all men, should be cited as the beginner of this "School of the Future" in music (what an arrogant title!), when he of all men mastered form and incorporated it into his own mind. This wild, reckless, formless mode of expression! Words may not suffice, but maudlinizing surely will not. Have you heard Liszt's chords of ninths, elevenths, thirteenth? It makes my hair stand on end to think of them. It is not necessary to write music like anyone, but it is necessary to write it within bounds if it is to live.

The Major had written in February: "Everyone in this world shirks responsibility; I assume it here from necessity, and like it." His letters grew more gay as spring came on, and he was now planning for a log cabin, or at least a board shanty, to shelter Mrs. Higginson, who hoped to join him at Duck Creek. On April 7 he is able to write that the "badly built shanty" is ready for her at last. On April 16: "They have a horrid story about the assassination of the President and of Mr. Seward all through the country here. It sounds too horrible to be true, and also unlikely."

Ten days later Mrs. Higginson arrived. She was pleased with the shanty, with her saddle horse, and with the life in the open; pleased too with her cow and chickens and the new problems of housekeeping, in which she had the assistance of a "native helper," Mrs. Hicks. Here is a Cotter's Saturday Night picture, drawn from Mrs. Higginson's "Diary":—

"After Hal came home Saturday, we had dinner of tongue, bread and butter, and baked apples. After dinner I drew and Hal read and we sat by the fire at dusk and talked. We talked about John Mill and then had tea, bread and butter and cheese, and in the evening Hal read some more 'Political Economy' and I drew and we talked and had some hot claret and water and a first-rate jollification."

Alas, in that very week,— and as if to spite the idyll of cherry blossoms and horseback rides and Mill's "Political Economy," read aloud over hot claret and water,— Mr. William Sheafe is writing on behalf of the Buckeye Trustees:—

I paid yesterday your draft of \$2000. . . . The payment of these bills and drafts reduced the amount remaining in the Treasury to about \$6000, scarcely enough to complete the work you have now under weigh. In nearly all the letters I have written you, I have desired you to keep in mind the necessity of a reasonable economy in your expenditures, as the working capital of the Company was not large, although it was considered sufficient to complete the work the Trustees had marked out to be accomplished. . . . The object in view, you will perceive, is *stop doing any more work on the Company's account.* . . . You will perceive that our aim is to reduce at once the expenses of the Company to the lowest possible figure; *but otherwise* than to discharge such of the hands *as can be spared without injury to the Company's interest or to stop buying any more tools, etc., incurring expense or contracting any debt,* we do not wish you to conclude or decide upon any

arrangement with B. and F. until first submitting the matter to us for decision. . . .

P.S. Please send your account of expenditures from the time you first went out. W. S.

It cannot be said that this letter was wholly a surprise to the Major. He had just written to his father that the Buckeye people were in such haste to make fortunes and so afraid of expenditures that they must find another agent. Only in March had he been informed that the working capital was limited to \$25,000. "We are doing rather too much work for the capital. . . . I cannot and will not bind myself to such a concern for any length of time." He had already, it appears, applied to George L. Ward of Boston, Treasurer of the Lewiston Cotton Mills, for a clerkship in New Orleans. Mr. Ward thought there might be an opening by November, but did not commit himself.

By the first week in June cherries and strawberries were ripe along Duck Creek, the Higginson's cow was giving twenty quarts of milk a day, and there were "signs of oil" in eight out of the Major's nine wells. One was actually pumping oil at the rate of \$300 a month, if only the oil could be marketed. But even the kindly and courteous Dr. J. B. Upham of the Buckeye Trustees now informs their agent: "Your time for which we originally agreed is indeed, as you say, well-nigh up." Mr. Sheafe writes on June 7:—

Sight drafts for \$2601.38 and \$510, drawn by you, have been presented. I have received no advices or notice of these drafts, and can only conjecture for what purpose they were drawn. . . . Our capital is exhausted, and any further drafts we shall have to *pay out of our own pockets*, as the articles of Trust forbid our contracting for more work than we have the actual means on hand to pay for. I trust you will not have to make any more drafts on me and that these amounts, together with

the two thousand dollars lately sent you, will be the last before you will be in condition to sell oil enough to pay all expenses. . . .

P.S. Please send your accounts to June 1st or to the time you next write. Also send correct estimate of daily expenses and the estimated cost of completing the work now going on. We wish you to reduce the expenses from this time to the lowest possible figure and contract for no material without special instructions to that effect from the Trustees.

W. S.

P.S. I wrote you May 24th and May 30th; nothing from you since those dates. An encouraging item greatly wanted and would be duly appreciated. Quotation Petroleum exchange to-day: "Buckeye — \$3. asked."

The final letter in the Buckeye file is also from Mr. Sheafe, and is dated June 24:—

"Your drafts come so thick and fast that I must again request you not to draw on me for purchase of any more material. The \$2000 I last sent we supposed would finish the work you have on hand for Company's account. . . . The strictest economy is now, more than ever, absolutely necessary; wages ought to be reduced, they have been reduced everywhere else. On the 15th March I wrote you stating the amount of capital we had to expend, and requested you not to undertake more work than that amount would fully pay for. That has all been expended, and considerably more, which I have paid out of my own pocket, taking my chance of getting it back. I will pay the draft you advise, of \$1000, but I do not feel like advancing any more — so you will incur no debts on my account, or on the Company's beyond what this will pay. When this is gone, we must stop work."

And so the curtain falls upon Duck Creek. Mrs. Higginson's Diary records:—

"We left our dear log-house last Friday, July 14. It was a

very fresh, cool morning. . . . We both had sat up late, Hal doing up accounts, and, as I found out the next morning, killing chickens at midnight for our morning breakfast. They were very nice — to reward his patience for picking them till 2 o'clock in the morning." Just seven days later, the Major was marching in the Commemoration Day procession in Cambridge. The Boston "Advertiser" of that date, July 21, quotes Buckeye shares at "\$3.00 asked." A month or two later it is "\$2.00 asked"; and by November Major Higginson, in a letter to his father, will be found rating the value of his own holdings in Tremont and Buckeye Oil stocks at "\$0.00." This was a closer guess than usual.

What next? Rainbow-chasing was followed by a gallant experiment in making bricks without straw: after hunting oil in Ohio, Henry Higginson turned to cotton-raising in Georgia. "Making money there is a simple question of being able to make the darkies work"; at least Higginson was so assured in September, 1865, by General Barlow, who was thinking of turning cotton-planter himself. A simple question! And Barlow was an able man, without many illusions. That golden autumn of 1865 was in truth a carpet-bagger's Paradise. Everything looked "simple" in the South: simple to "Thad" Stevens in the House, simple to Sumner in the Senate, simple — but perhaps not quite so innocently simple — to President Johnson with his shifting Reconstruction policies. The economic problems of the states lately in rebellion seemed to many Northerners as easy as the political problems: it was "simply" a matter of getting back to work, of increased production and better distribution. Blacks and whites would adjust themselves sooner or later to the new condition of affairs. The resources of the South were boundless; free labor was less wasteful than slave labor; with Northern capital and Northern energy, success was certain. In truth, it was a sort of after-the-Armistice intoxication. But human nature was not so easily to be born again.

In the Reminiscences Major Higginson thus described the purchase of "Cottonham":—

At the close of the Civil War many of us had nothing to do, and needed to earn our bread. I had perhaps four or five thousand dollars. . . . I had been in an office many years earlier, but my mercantile education was of no value, and, what was more, I did not wish to go into business. So we conceived the plan of going South and buying a plantation on which to grow cotton. We had done our best to upset the social conditions at the South, and helped free the negroes, and it seemed fair that we should try to help in their education. Two old comrades and friends — Channing Clapp and Charles F. Morse — liked the idea, and we three therefore went to Savannah in a remarkably dirty steamer, hoping to proceed from that point and get what we wanted. We rather liked the State of Georgia. We had no letters and no people to whom to turn, and knew only the commanding officer of the United States Army, General Brannan. We asked and asked about plantations and about means of getting at them, and at last heard of one called "Cottonham," belonging to an old man named Rogers. After trying for a week to get means of communication, we at last lighted on one venturesome hack-driver who would take us, for there were only two hacks in the town, and no means of conveyance except a dray. The railroad was gone, and the plantation was fifteen miles from the railroad. So we started out, came to various broken bridges, got across somehow or other, crossed the Ogeechee in a ferry, and reached a point on the railroad. From there it was a clean drive in the sand to the plantation, fifteen miles, with not a soul in sight and not an animal except one deer. We came to a bridge some twenty feet wide, and tried it to see if it was good. It seemed sound, and we drove on to it. The horses went through with all eight legs and hung there by their bellies. The driver was frantic, and said we had ruined him. We unhitched the team, and worked

hard to get the horses' legs out on to something stable, putting in fence-rails for that purpose. At last we got them up, pulled the carriage over and drove to the plantation.

The house was situated in a large field, and was surrounded by beautiful live oaks. A pleasant-looking old gentleman came out and greeted us, and asked us to come in and pass the night. We had a villainous supper of hominy, sweet potatoes and grease; it was hot as tophet, and we saw what our life was going to be.

The next day, Channing Clapp, being a good negotiator, traded with the old man, and we paid him \$30,000 for his five thousand acres of land. Of course there was a good, roomy house, a good stable for that country, a large negro settlement a mile away, and some negro houses on the yard of eight acres where the house stood. We went through the usual formalities of purchase, and then the old gentleman left. He was single and lived in piggish surroundings. The black woman who lived with him cooked his food, and her children put it on the table, and the boy slept in his room.

I went to Savannah, advertised for some negroes, as we needed some more, bought an army ambulance and half a dozen mules, and went back to the plantation. This was in the late autumn. The next duty was to get furniture, for there was nothing in the house fit to touch. We had to burn beds, mattresses, and everything else. Therefore, I went North, and engaged a schooner to take our goods to a point near the house. The creek of the Ogeechee River came to within a quarter of a mile of our house, and to that point we could bring the schooner. I brought furniture, some dogs, paint and various other things needed, including hams, for we could have no fresh meat. Then I went back to the plantation, and presently the schooner turned up and was unloaded. At that point Channing Clapp and I took off our coats and undertook to paint the whole house and a few pieces of old furniture which remained. The old man had gone one night, after getting drunk.

To this account, related more than fifty years after the event, a few details must be added from the bundle of "Georgia Plantation" letters in the Major's correspondence. It will be remembered that none of the three Yankee guardsmen who thus took possession of Cottonham was without experience of the South. Captain Channing Clapp, a classmate of Higginson, had served with him at Hilton Head and Beaufort and in the Virginia campaigns of 1862 and 1863. Colonel C. F. Morse, Harvard '58, and Higginson's comrade in the Second Massachusetts, had marched through Georgia with Sherman in December, 1864, and had fought over this very territory of Cottonham. Fort McAllister, whose capture is described in Sherman's "Memoirs," was only a short ride from the plantation, and the Federal gunboats had been thick on the Ogeechee River, but eight months before.

The nearest railroad station, fifteen miles away, was Way's Station in Bryan County, on the Gulf Railroad. It had fallen into the hands of "Mr. Sherman," — as the Georgians still called him, — and both railroad and station were considerably the worse for the experience. In fact, neither had been rebuilt at the time when the Massachusetts men took charge of their plantation. The easiest mode of delivering goods at Cottonham was to charter a schooner at Savannah, some thirty miles to the North. The winding channel ran through Ossabaw Sound, then up the Ogeechee River and Redbud Creek, to the landing-place, a quarter of a mile from the "big house."

The new owners were not ignorant of the typical features of the old plantation life. Higginson, at least, had read Olmsted's "Sea-Board Slave States," and in his box of books for Cottonham — selected, by the way, with the aid of Charles Eliot Norton — was Fanny Kemble's "Journal of a Residence on a Georgian Plantation in 1838-1839," which had been published in 1863. The plantation described by the unhappy English-woman was only thirty miles south of Cottonham.

In mid-October the three Massachusetts men had spent

three days in the Sea Islands, examining their system of labor and cultivation. "Three fourths of our letters are to rebels," Higginson wrote to his father. "That does not matter now. We are assured that we shall be well treated if we mind our own business. Still, many of the men to be met in the hotels have a very defiant air." On October 20 he sent this jubilant letter about the purchase:—

We have bought a plantation about thirty miles from Savannah, healthy, open to the sea-breeze, with deep water contiguous, with excellent house, negro-quarters, cotton and gin houses, gins, grist-mill, barns, etc., etc. The buildings are worth about \$20,000, and would cost more at going prices of lumber, etc. We have from 4000 to 6000 acres (surveys are not accurate here), 1000 under cultivation, and fences about eight miles in length in excellent order. For this we pay \$27,000, but *please mention this to no one at all*, as we all have agreed so to do. We have bought together of necessity, and shall run it together. We have also bought some stock, and shall buy more — as little as is needed to get on. We find the country perfectly quiet and safe, the people, black and white, as peaceable as at home, the educated men glad to see us, and labor we can get as much as we want apparently. At any rate many of the negroes on this plantation have never left at all and wish to stay. So we have solved our knotty points. And if cotton is going to advance even more, we shall do well.

Channing goes North in the morning to make money-arrangements, and he will call on you for \$9500 — say nine thousand, five hundred dollars. . . . I shall not return yet, but shall help to organize matters on the plantation and to get the house in order and be back between now and Christmas. . . . We have bought a good deal under the going rates here, and had no sooner finished our bargain than we were followed by two men from the Hilton Head colony, who were grieved to have lost the bargain. So I am easy about the investment.

. . . We can see no obstacle to a peaceful life and to ultimate success. . . .

On November 15 the Major, in a confidential letter to his father about raising funds for the enterprise, thus proceeds to count the unhatched chickens:—

We mean to cultivate 400 acres of cotton. A good yield is 120 lbs. to the acre on that plantation *without any manure*, so Mr. Rogers assures us. We shall manure a good deal, and have counted the cost of it. Suppose we get 80 lbs. to the acre, a low yield; that gives 32,000 lbs. This gives us, at \$1 per lb., \$32,000. Our labor % will be covered by \$12,000, and our other running expenses by  $\frac{3000}{15,000}$ . This leaves us \$17,000, or \$5633, apiece. I have here calculated everything *to come in* low, and every expenditure high. Next year we can probably cultivate much more land, and we shall average, one year with another, much more cotton to the acre. I have left out all gain of stock, such as cattle and hogs, which cost literally nothing and are very productive.

Of the labor situation the Major thus writes hopefully to his wife:—

These people are beginning to see that work or starvation is before them. Also that the idea of having a house and 40 acres from the U.S. is chimerical. They also know that we shall put other laborers, black or white, into their houses if they do not work for us; so they will fall in. We have offered them for good work the year round about \$370 for a man and wife, or about half that amount for a single person; also a good house, an acre of land for each hand, *i.e.* two acres for a man and wife, and fuel for the year. They will have sufficient time to cultivate this plot for themselves and can raise upon it corn and potatoes enough to eat. Of course they can keep pigs and chickens and

thus save nearly all their earnings except a small sum for clothing. We shall keep a store on the place for their benefit. Then we propose bye and bye to have a school for their children; this last as soon as we can manage it.

He had long talks in Savannah with an ex-rebel officer, a Harvard graduate, about the attitude of Southern men toward Reconstruction.

They feel no interest in the present state of public affairs [he writes]. Their whole theory of government, which was simply aristocratic, their every belief and hope, their personal property, everything but their acres of land, has vanished; and they do not yet see what or how to do. The idea of passive resistance still lives with them — they will not vote, they do not care to be represented, and they expect to embarrass the government in this way. They will see whether it makes any difference if all the southern representatives stay away. It is the old error that the South is in itself a first-class power, and carries in her hand the destinies of the world. Ignorance of history, of science, of the living world is at the bottom of it all.

There were wearisome days of waiting at Savannah for supplies and extra negro hands for the plantation. The major read St. Mark's Gospel, and Mill's "Essays," and Carlyle's "Cromwell," and wrote copiously on these topics to his wife. Finally he collected a few negroes, and sailed them down to Cottonham in a little schooner. Morse and Clapp now took charge of the outdoor work, leaving the house and its surroundings to be cleaned and repaired by the Major. He scrubbed and whitewashed and hammered away, and took his first lessons in housekeeping with negro servants.

They have been indulging in a belief or hope that the lands were to be divided at Christmas. But they are quite ready to

work, are strong, energetic, as far as we can see, and will come to their bearings before long. . . . They suspect everyone a little or much, and *will not work at all* for their old masters. . . . One good fellow, named January, is at work in the house, and has been asking me questions to-day. He says that very many of the blacks fear that, if they make a contract to work for a year (a point on which we insist in order to carry thro' and pick our crop), they will be slaves at the end of that time. I have told him, just as we tell everyone, the plainest, simplest facts of the case, and have told on what terms he can move into one of our houses and work for us. He is entirely content with our terms and our system; so are they all. . . . January wants to own a house and a piece of land; and he will do so in a few years.

This simple wish indicates the foundation of an excellent agricultural population. They get good wages, and then they spend freely at our little store. Their stock of clothing is wretched, and probably always was incomplete, so they are much pleased to see our cotton, calicoes, flannel, cloths, shoes, etc., etc. They see the work brings wages and the wages bring food and clothing. Once let this suspicion pass away, as is likely with us, and we shall have a good, reliable set of hands, I think, and what we can do others can do by like means. January was much pleased at my whitewashing beside him, and spoke of it. We of course do anything which is to be done with our own hands, if necessary, and these men compare it with the conduct of their former owners. It gives the labor a new aspect to them, and it puts life into their movements. All day I direct personally these men and women in and about the house as to the details of their work, in the kitchen, in the yard, in the overseer's house, in our house, and they like it. Then among us we have done the painting so far. M. does the same thing with the hands in the field and C. does the same likewise. They believe us already, when we say that we shall work for our living and shall get our crop in some way. It

removes somewhat the feeling of caste, and it presents the labor in a new light. Bye and bye, when they see us plough and chop and hoe, and drive mules and clean horses as well as show them the use of unknown tools like scythes, they will feel still more persuaded to do their whole duty.

They get their wages whenever they ask for them, and are already asking less frequently for them, because the suspicion is dying away that we shall cheat them. When we can establish a school and teach them something (some of them read now), we shall make another step onward; but even now we feel quite confident that we shall get men and women enough to fill our houses and to make our crops for next year. Even our overseer, who has the regular Southern notions about manual labor, has to-day been whitewashing a little and working at his house that is to be. I was quite pleased, for that class needs reforming and educating quite as much as the blacks. It will come all in good time — they must work or die.

By the middle of December the "big house" looked cleaner, and the Major left for Boston, to spend Christmas and to bring back his wife. Her diary for February 9 describes the long drive behind tired mules from Savannah to Cottonham.

"The branches of the Cherokee roses were green already, and there were pretty little yellow flowers in the swamp. . . . It was too dark to see our place as we entered. Mr. Morse and Channing Clapp came out with a light to the gate. A bright fire was blazing on the hearth. The first impression of the house is much more low and homelike than I had imagined. The rooms looked clean but bare. The table looked quite pleasant, with Matilda standing near, grinning and curtseying at every turn, and Mary also."

Two days later she writes of the house-servants: "They have not the remotest sense of time, any of them, and are forgetful but pleasant in their manners, very polite and kind, and ready to learn." So far, so good.

The cotton-planting was now beginning, and the field-hands struck for higher wages. After two days of excitement they quieted down. Mrs. Higginson's diary notes, February 14:—

"The darkies have been coming round about the strike, now that they find they cannot stay unless they work, and that no credit is given them in the store unless they are earning wages. Mr. M. says they really have an attachment to the place and that is about the only definite feeling he can find that they have, and so they are beginning to make and sign contracts, though unwillingly. They still do not understand the value of work and wages. Think they ought to get all their living and have wages besides, all extra. The men walked in with their old coats and hats, put their finger on the pen while Mr. M. made the cross, and I was called in as witness. The contracts run in this way. Every family is to have an acre and  $\frac{1}{2}$  of land to a full hand, and a house and the right to cut wood. On their land they can grow either cotton or corn, provided it does not interfere with the proper cultivation of the land provided for. For each acre cultivated, about \$8.50, which carries them on to the middle of July, then the picking, sorting, moting, by the pound. Two cents a pound for packing, and for extra labor \$1.00 for men per day and less for women and boys, which would give to a good, steady hand about \$18.50 income of work per acre, and all extra work to be counted by the day. A good hand could take about eight acres, and earn about \$200 per year, or somewhat less, and get his house, his wood, and his corn and cotton land.

"The largest contract is made with a man named Samuel, who with his family has contracted for about thirty-five acres for this year, and earns in wages about \$800 per year. To this they have finally agreed, after much parley.

"The house servants get wages by the month: the women \$12 per month, the old women about .75 for each washing-day; little Mary will have something too, and Charity who helps, a niece of Mathilda's, will get .50 per day, and be dismissed

soon, when Prince's wife, "The Princess," arrives, who is to help about the washing. The man David, Mathilda's husband, carpenter, gets \$25 per month and his rations for himself and family, house, fuel, but no land to cultivate. Prince, who milks cows, cuts wood, blacks boots, is also paid per month. And this is about the whole household. They are good, active, honest people, all of them."

After two weeks more of experience, the kindly lady from the North records a somewhat modified estimate of the negroes:—

"We none of us think that if left to themselves they would have energy enough to be really thrifty and prosperous, no matter how much help they should get in the way of lands. Of course there are exceptions, but they seem to need supervision, and spurring on and urging and system to guide them, which they would not be likely to have of their own accord. However, time will show, whether this is merely the result of slavery and dependence, or whether they can ever be wholly independent."

And on March 9 the diary notes: "Curious creations these darkies are. I don't believe they could work, entirely left to themselves." "Ida works very hard with her people," the Major wrote to his father. "She has to teach them almost everything except the plainest cooking. Washing and ironing were unknown to them."

Meanwhile Major Higginson was having his own experiences with the colored brethren.

Do you know [he writes home], that these people eat at odd times, standing up, sitting in the doorway, one by one, not together? The men very frequently say at ten o'clk, or sometimes as late as one or two o'clk, that they must go to their breakfasts, and I find that man and wife receive their wages separately, and spend them separately, not paying each other's debts at the store nor sharing each other's money or food. "Pete, him pay for him one, and me, me pay for me

one," said a woman to us yesterday at the store, she and Pete being wife and man. It is strange and bad. We do not give them things, for various reasons: they had better work for everything now; they expect, and are not grateful for, presents, and we cannot afford to give. You never saw such strange and at the same time unpleasant work as keeping shop for these folks. "Give me five cents' sugar," and I change a dollar-bill and weigh out a dole of sugar. "Give me five cents' hard bread," and then "ten cents' tobacco," and then "ten cents' flour" etc., etc., each time receiving the whole change before ordering again, for this is all the purchase of one person. We sometimes try to get all the things before making any change, but do not find it easy to extract the orders in that way.

Greely Curtis, who had returned from Europe and become a financial backer of the cotton-planting scheme, visited the plantation in March. He was amused to recognize that the "big house," of which he was now part owner, was the very one at which he had thrown a few shells, "just for fun, not intending to injure it," in 1862, when the Union gunboat Huron had shelled Fort McAllister.

By April the crops were planted, the country was ablaze with wild azaleas, honeysuckles, and Cherokee roses, and Mr. and Mrs. Higginson had wonderful horseback rides in the late afternoons. He wrote his father: "I am getting able to bear considerable bodily fatigue now, but am surprised to see how much less I can bear or do than at seventeen." By May 1 he discovered that "incidental expenses run up a good deal"; and as the hot weather came on, there was increasing trouble with fleas, flies, mosquitoes, and snakes.

There was sickness among the negroes, and Mr. and Mrs. Higginson had to prescribe remedies, chiefly quinine, as best they could.

"They are very strange people, these darkies [Mrs. Higgin-

son wrote in her diary]. Their wits and intellect seem to me far ahead of their morals. . . . You feel as if you could not influence them in the least. . . . When we first came they were getting over the smallpox, and now all the children have the whooping-cough. Three of them died. I am quite in despair, as I don't know exactly what to do for them. I got the doctor the other day, a pale lounging vague man, who was the rebel surgeon in Ft. McAllister, and who gave me some medicine for them. . . . I have been struck with the cheerful way in which the negroes take death. One young woman lost her only child, and looked as bright as possible when I spoke to her about it. I don't think it is indifference, and don't know what it is."

Mrs. Higginson had now started a little school for the negro children, and by June she and her husband were teaching reading and writing to a class of fifteen. "As for the blacks," the Major writes to his father, "their future is a mystery as dark as their own skins. They have understanding and quickness enough. . . . They learn quickly, comprehend easily, both as regards work and in school. But their moral perceptions are deficient, either from nature or from habit or from ignorance. They know that it is wrong to steal and lie, but they do it continually."

One Sunday, when the Major was preaching to the negroes in their church,—a discourse unfortunately unreported,—Mrs. Higginson "preached in the kitchen to Jane, Mary, and the old lady, Mathilda having gone on a spree. The text was the parable of the sower of seeds. I wonder if they understood one half of what I said."

The cotton was blossoming beautifully by the end of June; the Major had his two war horses, "Piggy" and "the gray," for riding; and though the weather grew intensely hot, and the drinking-water from the shallow wells was bad, and food-supplies difficult to obtain, the Northerners kept up their courage.

We had some nice-looking cows which gave very little milk [says Mr. Higginson's Reminiscences], and a large abundance of pigs. The house was raised from the ground two or three feet, as is customary there, for there are no cellars. The pigs used to come under the house and rub and squeal and fight. Therefore, we made up our minds that we would give those pigs away. We called all the negroes into the yard, and told them that each family was to have one large pig, one middle-sized pig and one little pig, and in that way we got rid of all of them. By and by we did the same thing with the cows — that is, killed them, and divided the beef among our people.

It is not until the 10th of July that there is any hint of disappointment with the cotton crop. "I am in hopes," writes the Major to his father, "that we shall harvest 25,000 lbs. of ginned cotton, which at 80 cents would give us \$20,000; some drawbacks are of course to be reckoned out. If insects should attack the cotton, we may not get more than 15,000 lbs., say \$12,000, which would about cover our wages for the year '66. But I hope for a better result than this."

Such was the situation when he took Mrs. Higginson north in August. Returning alone, early in September, he writes his father that the cotton is "in fair condition, though no more, in consequence of the drought." Picking had begun, and the negroes were content with their lot.

They help each other [wrote the Major] in picking the different patches of cotton, as it opens, and get so much per lb. for all picked. It is an encouragement to them to cultivate well and raise as much as possible off their patches, for each family picks its own ground. If they receive help on it, they return help, not money. Of course a woman can pick cotton (or berries) more quickly from an acre bearing well than from two acres bearing ill. Last week we paid one woman, who has a husband and two children of fifteen or so working with her,

\$20 for four days' work. During the rest of the time they were earning more money on other work. As I was writing to Ida to-night, this plan of payment seems to us better than giving a share in the crop, because the laborer with empty pockets risks a bad or a good season, has to seek advances continually of which he can keep no account, thereby complicating the settlement, and then has to wait a long time for the preparation, marketing and sale of the crop.

But two days later he is obliged to write: "The continual rains are injuring our crop considerably. Yesterday we had two tremendous showers lasting several hours altogether, and to-day we found quite a lot of cotton beaten out and lying dirty and useless in the sand." On the fine days in October he was busy picking and weighing cotton; and occasionally he rode off on "Piggy" for a shot at a wild turkey or a rabbit. But he was worried about the crop. If the rains could only have come in the summer instead of the fall! "It has cut off all our profit, I fancy," he confides to his father on November 4. Yet at the same time he was writing to his wife, who was troubled over their expenses: "Please remember that one great reason for our coming here was the work of great importance to be done for these blacks. Money is less valuable than time and thought and labor, which you have given and will give freely. . . . DO NOT FRET ABOUT ACCOUNTS!!!! Money is to be spent wisely, not hoarded forever."

He was never to write more characteristic words than these; and he had jumped up twice as he was writing them, to fire at a hawk that was just then stealing his chickens!

"We have made about half a crop;" he tells his father on November 17, "and seem likely to get a low price for our best cotton. . . . So we have lost a good deal of money."

And in December he writes from Savannah:—

We have just about 12,000 lbs. of clean cotton and are done ginning. I find the prices lower and the market very dull here

to-day. I am a little puzzled to know what to do. Present prices are not enough to compensate at all for the year's work and outlay. . . . It has cost about \$16,500 to make our crop, and we shall get \$9000 to \$10,000 for it, we hope. A good crop at \$1.00 a lb. would have given \$25,000. There is the whole story.

Here ended the first lesson. The second lesson was shorter. Was it worth while to remain?

"I think that common sense and my own good name for courage and persistency demand that the experiment be fairly tried," wrote the Major manfully. Mrs. Higginson, with Channing Clapp's mother, had arrived in time for the Christmas preparations, and there was a great tree, with presents for all the women and children on the plantation, and candy for everybody. "A very elegant entertainment," declared Mathilda; but Mrs. Higginson confessed in her diary to "disappointment at not hearing more expressions of delight from these imperturbable darks. . . . The more I see of them, the more inscrutable do they become, and the less do I like them."

The housemaids left immediately after Christmas. "The old year finished rather gloomily with the whole day spent in the cold wet washroom, instructing 'Amy' from our village about washing." Then arrived a certain ragged and foul Lavinia. "I took her to the washroom," continues Mrs. Higginson's Diary, "where there was a big fire, filled a bucket with warm water and proceeded." (Miss Ophelia, of "Uncle Tom's Cabin," would have liked that reticent word "proceeded"!) But Lavinia, once scrubbed and dressed in some old clothes of her mistress, proved a cheerful person, and could repeat the Lord's Prayer.

By the middle of January all the field hands threatened to leave. "Perhaps we shall not plant at all," wrote Henry to his father, "for our people may clear out. One can never tell in this blessed land. These darkies have been very well paid,

kindly treated, taught, helped by us, but they feel no gratitude for all this, and may go any day." Soon they signed the contracts for 1867, but Henry writes to his father that the partners had spent \$20,155, including interest, in raising the 1866 crop, and that it "may bring us \$10,000. I am at present rather looking forward to leaving this place in the summer for good . . . exceedingly unwilling as I am to make another move. If I could earn \$1500 a year at the North, I could live there."

He adds in his next letter:—

I should have done better to enter your office in '64 as a paid clerk with a prospect of becoming partner: indeed should do so now, if that were possible. Still this work, embracing as it does the whole black question, is highly useful and important. If I were rich enough to disregard gains, and could spend something on the welfare of the blacks, Ida and I could doubtless produce some satisfactory results in a few years. A little money put into better houses and into the simplest home-comforts would tell greatly.

One reason, doubtless, for Henry's restlessness in February, 1867, was the sudden change in the Higginson family affairs. Grandfather Lee had just died, after years of invalidism, and had left an unexpectedly large bequest to George Higginson, in trust for his children. James J. Higginson had entered a broker's office, and F. L. Higginson had gone to work with Lee, Higginson and Co. Alexander Agassiz and Quincy Shaw, brothers-in-law of Henry Higginson, had secured control of the Calumet and Hecla mines in Michigan, and were beginning to see results beyond their most sanguine expectations; in fact, "beyond the wildest dreams of copper men."<sup>1</sup> George Higginson, cautious as he was by nature, and unfortunate as

<sup>1</sup> See Agassiz's letter to H. L. H., Feb. 3, 1867, in *Letters and Recollections of Alexander Agassiz*, p. 58.

his ventures had often proved, was buying all the Calumet and Hecla he could carry, and his children did likewise.

I think that we had better hold the Calumet [wrote Henry on February 15] and I sincerely wish that I had much more. If I could have had 1000 shares at \$20, it would have been pleasant in the present state of the market. I know that coppers are very risky, but a mine of such promise, well managed, should be good property. If you should think it wise and it is possible, I should much like to put something more into Calumet or Hecla, say \$1000 to \$2000. Jim can ascertain from Alex, I think, the comparative value, but I should fancy Hecla at \$50 cheaper than Calumet at \$75. I cannot feel very sure as to the move, for I have made several bad strokes — in the "Tremont Oil Co." — in selling a share of "Norway Plains" — in buying "Washington." Quin and Alex, with their knowledge of just this business, with their ability, honesty, industry, nerve, and power (in the way of money), and with their complete control of these mines, give me faith in them as an investment.

It is no wonder that Henry's imagination played around Lake Superior and Boston while the spring ploughing was going forward at Cottonham. Minor annoyances increased. The house-servants stole. Supplies were stolen from the express office at Way's Station, and from the wharf at Savannah. "It does require the patience and purse of a Job to stand it."

More serious than these petty losses was the discovery that the suave Mr. Rogers had really owned only 2500 of the 5000 acres which he had sold to the unsuspecting Yankees. Their title to one half of the plantation was worthless. They brought suit, but were able to recover very little.<sup>1</sup> Always, in the background, there was the insoluble race question. Higginson wrote in April: —

<sup>1</sup> Colonel C. F. Morse charitably suggests (1921) that, though Rogers cheated them, it is possible that he really did not know how much land he owned.

The black population must be helped towards civilization of any kind, if we wish to see any result within a reasonable time. The Southerners cannot help them for various reasons: because they hate and despise them, because they, the whites, are too lazy, because they are too ignorant and uncivilized. It is a long, long struggle against ignorance, prejudice and laziness. The blacks will advance, if they are led, and if they will trust anyone. *Now* they cannot be induced to talk, to ask questions. They will listen, but not heed much from a white man.

The heat increased. Higginson had sound ideas about manuring for cotton, and the Egyptian seeds, procured through the friendly Edward Atkinson, — a "projector" after Defoe's own heart, — sprouted vigorously. But rats and mice and fleas and malaria flourished likewise. Channing Clapp decided to leave. George Higginson, paternally concerned for Henry's future, advised him to give up: "Alex" and "Quin" might make a place for him at the mines, or there might be a chance for a clerkship in some London banking house. Mrs. Higginson wanted to stay at least a year longer. "We had better not leave this place till we have at least been of some trifling use in some way or other." But she had already had a touch of malaria, and her husband grew more and more anxious about her. On May 9 she writes in her diary: —

"It is discouraging to see how utterly wanting in character and conscience these people seem to be, and how much more hopeful they appear at a distance than near to. Henry and I have had quite a long talk about going home. It is pretty certain that we shall not come back again to stay. Henry at any rate means to try to get employment at the North, and only come back to settle his affairs here. . . . I am sorry, for I shall leave this place with a sense of utter failure. Failure to do any good, except the little I have done in school. Failure to manage the blacks well and quietly as servants; but I have learnt a great deal, and I suppose if I keep that in view, and remember

it and also the errors, to avoid them in future, it will not be time lost, at least not personally."

A few days later Henry Higginson's copies of the New York "Evening Post," the "Nation," the "Spectator," "Littell's," and the "Revue des Deux Mondes" were ordered to be sent to 44 State Street, Boston. The books were packed, presents were distributed to the schoolchildren and house-servants, and at midnight on the twenty-first the Higginsons started North. It was another failure.

Colonel Morse stayed on at Cottonham, though he had "come to the conclusion that all the money ever made there [before the war] was made in live stock — that is, in negroes. The cotton perhaps paid the expenses, and when they needed a little money, they sold a negro." But this convenient solution of the financial problem was now out of date. The crop of 1867 looked promising until September, when the caterpillars suddenly appeared and ruined it. When the Massachusetts men finally settled their accounts, they found that their experience had cost them about \$65,000. "We sold the plantation," said Higginson, "for \$5000, and were glad to be rid of it." Channing Clapp, writing from New Orleans on December 22, 1867, is equally terse: "What a d——d piece of business the whole thing is!"

Yet that is too profane an ending for the second lesson. If Henry Higginson had been a prophet, he might have chanted, with Tagore: —

My sword is forged, my armor is put on, my horse is eager to run.  
I shall win my kingdom.

## CHAPTER IX

### LEE, HIGGINSON AND COMPANY

We have kept our hands clean. It has come from old John Lee and George Higginson. — H. L. H. *June 20, 1919.*

ON January 1, 1868, Henry Higginson became a partner in Lee, Higginson and Co. He remained a member of the firm until his death, more than fifty years later. The chances and changes of his venturesome youth and early manhood were at last behind him. He had come to anchor in State Street. Certainly it was not the port he had first looked for, and some of his lifelong intimates, while fully recognizing his success, persisted in thinking him temperamentally out of tune with his calling. He once said, in fact, to a near kinsman, that he never walked into 44 State Street without wanting to sit down on the doorstep and cry. No doubt he meant at the moment — or thought he meant — quite what he said.<sup>1</sup>

But Mr. Higginson's simple and forthright habit of speech was often the disguise for very complex emotional moods. He was almost as far as Lincoln from being a simple-minded man. It is not recorded that this lover of music ever did sit down and weep in State Street, either through self-pity, or through

<sup>1</sup> "As a matter of fact," comments one of his partners, "Mr. Higginson loved to be in this office; it was very hard to get him out of it for a day — even a single Saturday. He seemed to me always, during the twenty years I was associated with him, to wake up every morning with an eager desire to be in his office and to be there for the day, and to be nowhere else. . . . He was much more interested in the venture side of business than in mere buying at wholesale and selling at retail. . . . Between his love of adventure, as applied to business (I might say almost passion for adventure), and his often fallacious judgment of men, there is no doubt he not only loved to be in his office, but also at times endured much anxiety and almost agony. I can perfectly understand his saying some day to a friend that he felt like sitting down on the doorstep and crying. It represented a mood for that day and very likely some anxiety or depression which bore heavily just then upon him."

instinctive antagonism to his environment. What is certain is that he worked and laughed there for half a century; that there he bought and sold, worried, dreamed, was angered and relented, served his partners and assisted his friends, forgot sometimes to look at the debit side of accounts, but on the whole was clearly and greatly disobedient to Charles Lowell's injunction, "Don't grow rich." Europe and Virginia, Ohio and Georgia, had helped to fashion him, but it was State Street, after all, that gave him opportunity to render an unmatched service to the community.

In some notes on the history of Lee, Higginson and Co., dictated late in life, Henry Higginson thus describes the origin of the firm:—

In the year 1848 Mr. John C. Lee, of Salem, and Mr. George Higginson, of Boston, who were cousins by marriage, joined hands in making a stock-brokerage house, and established themselves in State Street on the southern side, over the old Boylston insurance office.<sup>1</sup> They were men of about forty-four or forty-five years, and had had some experience in business. Mr. Lee had inherited some money, and had gone on quietly, not doing much in an active way. Mr. Higginson, from the age of twenty-one, had been a commission agent in New York, where he had lived and worked with a cousin until the year 1837, when he failed, as so many did. Then he came to Boston with his wife and three children, and undertook a small commission business in merchandise, which he carried on from that time until he established himself as a stockbroker. In these ten years he earned very little — just enough to keep the wolf from the door. . . .

When Mr. Lee went into business he had nine children, and, therefore, probably felt the need of a little more money. He always had lived in a beautiful house in Chestnut Street, Salem, and amused himself with a garden in the neighborhood.

<sup>1</sup> The Exchange Building now stands on this site.

The house of Lee and Higginson began by getting a fair share of the brokerage business, Mr. Lee being the partner in the office, and Mr. Higginson being the partner in the brokers' Board and outside. Neither of them ever earned so much money as they did in those years, but it was very little after all.

Mr. George C. Lee, son of Mr. John C. Lee, was taken in as a clerk after leaving college, and on April 1, 1853, Mr. Henry Lee (Jr.) — who was Mr. Higginson's brother-in-law, and who had had considerable success as an East India merchant — and Mr. George C. Lee were admitted to partnership. The firm at that time opened an account with Messrs. Baring Brothers and Co., and used to draw on that house, doing in this way a considerable business in exchange and in notes receivable. The house used to buy the best paper, chiefly mill paper, and also executed such orders as it received. This went on for some years until the Civil War broke out, when, owing to the fluctuations in gold, they thought an exchange account too dangerous and, therefore, gave it up.

In the first five years the firm of Lee and Higginson employed no clerk except at periods of special pressure. When Colonel Henry Lee and Mr. George C. Lee were admitted to partnership in 1853, the name of the firm became "Lee, Higginson and Co.," and its importance increased. They moved into the back part of No. 44 State Street. Colonel Henry Lee, even in his youth, was a notable figure in Boston.<sup>1</sup> Mr. George C. Lee, whose partnership lasted 57 years, until his death in 1910, was prudent, assiduous, a lover of detail. Both Colonel Henry Lee and Mr. John C. Lee had the confidence of the business community. The Civil War brought some changes in the activities of the firm. John C. Lee retired at the end of 1862, and Colonel Henry Lee's patriotic services at the State House demanded a large portion of his energy. George Higginson

<sup>1</sup> See the *Memoir of Henry Lee*, by J. T. Morse, Jr., Boston, 1905.

and George C. Lee divided the Stock Exchange work — a seat then costing but \$100.

In 1867 Colonel Henry Lee hit upon a plan for constructing a safety vault under No. 40 State Street. This building was owned by his family.

"Always skillful in real estate affairs," says Professor Barrett Wendell,<sup>1</sup> he conceived the plan of excavating, under the building where his firm had its offices, the first safety-deposit vaults in Boston, which long remained the most satisfactory in the United States, and indeed have been held the models from which later ones have since developed everywhere. They were constructed slowly and with every imaginable care: for one thing, the strength of their roof was tested by dropping a large safe on it from a height of four or five stories. They were not ready for use until 1868; since that time, for a full half-century, they have been the principal depository of the securities held in Boston. They have long been incorporated as the Union Safe Deposit Vaults. Though never a part of the business of Lee, Higginson and Company, they have always stayed close to it, both physically and in management. The general confidence implied by such an institution can hardly be exaggerated; and, incidentally, it is pleasant to think that Mr. Schuyler Bartlett, who came into the service of the vaults when they were opened in 1868, is still at his responsible post there in 1918."<sup>2</sup>

"Mr. Henry Lee began by passing four days of the week there," notes Mr. Higginson, "and Mr. George C. Lee passed two days; presently Mr. George C. Lee passed four days in the vaults and Mr. Henry Lee two days; and before long Mr. George C. Lee passed all his time there, and Mr. Henry Lee went in when he chose."

Such was the situation at 40 and 44 State Street on January 1, 1868, when the new partner joined the firm. His father had

<sup>1</sup> In an unpublished sketch of the history of the firm.

<sup>2</sup> He is still there in 1921.

been in the business twenty years; his younger brother Frank was as yet only a clerk. Henry Higginson loved to insist that he himself was not really wanted. "I was taken in at the beginning of 1868 as a matter of charity, to keep me out of the poorhouse; I had been in the War, had been planting cotton at the South, and lost all I had, and more too."<sup>1</sup>

In the notes dictated in 1912, and already quoted in part, he said:—

Mr. Henry L. Higginson, knowing that he was not wanted in the firm and having to make his place good, worked as hard as possible to draw in business. At the time he joined the firm he was \$10,000 or \$12,000 under water. [He was sent at once into the Stock Exchange, alternating there with Mr. George C. Lee.] On Jan. 1, 1869 [the notes continue], Mr. F. L. Higginson and John C. Bancroft were taken into the firm as partners. Mr. Bancroft remained 18 months, and then went away, as business was distasteful to him. Mr. F. L. Higginson was a man of unusual ability, quickness of mind and shrewdness, with the highest kind of character; and he was the most brilliant partner that the house ever had. When he came back from Europe he took hold of the business in earnest, and helped to increase it very much.<sup>2</sup>

Mr. John T. Morse, in his noteworthy sketch of Major Higginson,<sup>3</sup> comments thus upon the stock-brokerage firm of Lee, Higginson and Co. in this period:—

"It was already a good business and rapidly growing. It is true that one had not to look back far to see one or two brokers running about State Street and trying to get someone to buy or to sell a few shares of a cotton mill or one of the little New

<sup>1</sup> Letter to De Forest Candee, 1908.

<sup>2</sup> "My brother, F. L. Higginson, and I got out in front here at 44 State Street, and we thought that was a great stroke. Then we got our 50 State Street, and that was better." H. L. H. Talk to Bond Salesmen, Oct. 9, 1919.

<sup>3</sup> *Proceedings Massachusetts Historical Society*, vol. 53, p. 116. Also printed in *Harvard Graduates' Magazine*, March, 1920.

England railroads, and thus doing all the brokerage business that offered. But within a few years a new situation had developed. The lavish outpouring of bonds and stock by the new Western railroads, the impetus given by the war to manufacturing industries, the flood of paper money, the issues of Government bonds with tempting fluctuations in price, the speculation in gold, the gambling in the cheap 'coppers,' all combined to make a stock exchange which would have dazed the old-time broker. The family and social connections of the firm assured to it the best possible clientèle; there was sufficient capital; the partners had the highest standing in point of character; thus, all else being propitious, it remained only for them to make good in point of ability, and this they proceeded to do. . . .

"Further, the firm owed in some measure to family alliances its well-advised connections with the best financial enterprises of the day. Thus in the case of the great Calumet and Hecla Copper Mine, mother of fortunes, and fruit of the resolute faith of Quincy Shaw, the scientific knowledge of Alexander Agassiz, the practical energy of both — these two brothers-in-law of Major Higginson naturally brought their gallant bird to deposit her golden (or copper) eggs in the nest at 40 State Street."

The Calumet and Hecla shares, as some persons still ruefully remember, were originally offered at \$12.50, and had been sold as low as \$5.00. Since then, they have touched \$1000. Mr. George Higginson had been a director from the first, and his children, ever since Alexander Agassiz's letter to Henry Higginson in February, 1867, had invested in the mines to the extent of their ability. "Our office was a sort of headquarters for the property," said Mr. Higginson, "and our friends bought a great many shares." But those dizzying hopes of 1867 were followed by a period of discouragement. Alexander Agassiz's lonely and heroic struggles at Lake Superior — recorded in chapter IV of his biography — ultimately saved the situation; but the first dividend from the Hecla mine was

not paid until December, 1869, and the first dividend from the Calumet in August, 1870. The consolidation of the mines followed in 1871, and the subsequent record of the property is written large in the memory of Bostonians. But the unwritten history of the public and private benefactions — scientific, artistic, philanthropic — made possible by Calumet and Hecla, and its influence upon certain family histories, is a theme worthy of Balzac.

The construction of Western railroads, and particularly the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy, a Boston enterprise, afforded another great field for the activities of Lee, Higginson and Co. The New England energy and daring, which had once found its outlet in foreign commerce, now turned to the development of the West. It is curious to remember that John M. Forbes, who had begun his career in the China trade, had written to his brother in 1836: —

“By no means invest any funds of mine in railway stocks. . . . I have good reasons to believe, from all I can learn of the English railways, that ours will prove a failure after the first few years; the wear and tear proves ruinous. At any rate, keep clear of them. Three ships going this week.”

Yet only ten years later, when it became apparent that steamships and tariffs would ultimately ruin the Boston China trade, Mr. Forbes turned shrewdly to the despised “railway stocks.” He became President of the Michigan Central Railroad in 1846, and raised millions for its equipment. Then he became President of the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy. One of his directors was General Charles Jackson Paine — a Bedford Place boy and cousin of Henry Higginson. Paine “sat habitually,” says J. T. Morse, “in the office of Lee, Higginson and Co., where he could be seen almost any forenoon, ensconced in a comfortable armchair, handsome, silent, puffing at a cigar which seemed never to have had a beginning and certainly never had an end. If the firm sought information, it was there at hand.”

The firm did seek information, exact and dispassionate,

about the condition of all the properties in whose stocks and bonds it was dealing. It was one of the pioneers in the practice of securing statistical information, and placing it at the disposal of its clients. But it was before the days of card-indexes and filing cabinets, and it exemplified Goethe's theory that the best encyclopædia is a man who is well posted. The Lees and Higginsons were not only well posted as to the value of securities, but were known to be honest men. Much of the initiative in widening the firm's business, in the five years between 1868 and 1873, was due to the younger partners, the Higginson brothers. The strain was at times fierce and exhausting; not all mines were Calumets nor all railroads "C. B. and Q.'s." The days of darkness were many. In the autumn of 1868 there was a bad time in the stock market, and in 1869, (September 24) came "Black Friday" — the gold panic due to the machinations of Fisk and Gould. The Chicago fire of 1871 and the Boston fire of 1872 brought heavy losses to holders of securities, and the panic of 1873 was far more serious still. "All these things were an education," said Major Higginson, "but at the same time very painful to the firm."

Those five years brought many changes to the Higginson family. Chauncy Street had been given up to "trade," and Mr. George Higginson had removed to Beacon Street. Fortune was smiling upon him at last, and he was able at seventy to retire from the firm with a competency. His daughter was married,<sup>1</sup> and was living in Philadelphia. His son James was also married,<sup>2</sup> and had formed a broker's partnership in New York with Edward C. Chase, an army comrade who had shared his blanket in Libby Prison. This firm of Chase and Higginson prospered, and made a convenient New York connection for Lee, Higginson and Co. of Boston.

Mr. and Mrs. Henry Higginson, after their return from Georgia, lived in a little apartment house at the corner of La

<sup>1</sup> To S. Parkman Blake.

<sup>2</sup> To Miss Margaret Gracie, of New York.

Grange Street and Tremont Street, called the "La Grange House." Mr. Francis Boott and his daughter and Mr. Sebastian Schlesinger also had apartments here, and there were many delightful musical evenings in Mr. Schlesinger's rooms. Then the Higginsons moved to the Hotel Hamilton on Clarendon Street, where their daughter Cécile — named after Mrs. Higginson's mother, Cécile Braun — was born, in January, 1870. There they remained until February, 1874, when they removed into 191 Commonwealth Avenue. They spent the summers from 1870 to 1875 in a rented cottage at Beverly Farms, and began to build their own summer home in Manchester-by-the-Sea in 1878. Ten years later they acquired another summer home, "Rock Harbor" at Westport on Lake Champlain, and were habitually there in the early autumn. But it was ten years after their marriage before they ceased to be "tent-dwellers."

Henry Higginson could afford to take few holidays. His hurried business trips to New York are recorded in brief letters to his wife. "We're pretty busy to-day. I've turned a penny for you, and hope one of these days to see you driving your own wagon." Or it might be: "A bad day in stocks. But Chase and Higginson and we are all right."

In the summer of 1870 he made the first of many journeys to the West, to investigate railroad properties. At Niagara he saw the first train of Pullman cars, just then "perfected." At Burlington, Iowa, the home of his friend C. E. Perkins, who had married a niece of John M. Forbes, he writes a typically Higginsonian preachment against the American eagerness for wealth: "Money, money, success in material pursuits! It is injuring our generation, but perhaps the next may be the better for it. More good and educated men and women may strive for the welfare and civilization of America." Ralph Waldo Emerson, in his yearly lecture-trips through this same West, had recorded many similar passages in his "Journal."

In 1871 Higginson crossed the Mississippi and the Missouri again, in company with his friends C. F. Adams and C. F. Morse, and saw the Indian Territory. "The prairie stretched out for miles and miles," he writes to his wife, "and far away on the horizon was an enormous cattle herd just coming from Texas. A few Indian women rode away, with their colts and dogs galloping after them. It was the only large, free view that I had had, so it seemed then, although everything is so wide and open here. And I wished that you and I had our horses here to gallop away over the soft springy sod, until we were tired." On his way home he studied some new Michigan railroad projects and visited Quincy Shaw at Calumet. In October, he had some tonic days with John M. Forbes on the island of Naushon, riding and shooting. But on all these excursions "business" sat behind the saddle.

In 1872 [the Reminiscences relate], came the great Boston fire, which was a terrible disaster to us. Professor and Mrs. Agassiz were staying with us that night [Saturday, November 9] at the Hotel Hamilton, where we were then living. During dinner, seeing the great light, I went down-town at about eight o'clock. I soon found what trouble everybody was in, tried to do what I could, and did not return home until four o'clock Sunday afternoon. I had had nothing to eat or drink in all that time, but was in duty bound to look after the Union Safety Deposit Vaults. People were trying to get in and carry their securities away, because they thought the vaults would be burned. Mr. Henry Lee was in Europe, as was my brother Frank; Mr. Whittier, who had joined the firm a year or two before, was in the West, and Mr. George C. Lee, who had charge of the vaults, was terribly worried by the demands to open the vaults. Therefore, he went to the South End and kept out of sight. (This by agreement, and I never knew where he went.) Therefore, I was left alone. A crowd of men kept trying to have the vaults opened, and I was continually fending them off.

My father came down and carried away our books to his house. During the night I went to all sorts of places, and, among others, to City Hall, to beg the Mayor to order the blowing up of certain buildings in order to make a gap. By and by there were a few explosions tried under the care of General Benham of the United States Army, but nothing decent was accomplished. In order to get the powder, he had telegraphed to the forts, and a number of kegs of powder were sent to the end of Long Wharf, but there was nobody to fetch it up. So I found a covered wagon open at the sides, got it to the end of Long Wharf, and loaded some thirty kegs of powder on it and drove up State Street, which was full of engines pumping, and sparks were flying in every direction.

The fire was checked at last, chiefly because there was not much more to burn. It had begun in the dry-goods district. During the previous week there had been a bad attack of "horse-ail" [the "epizootic"], and during the week a great many horses had been incapacitated. The City Government had been asked to get fresh horses every day, in order that the engines could be got out promptly in case of fire. I remember during that week seeing an ox-team coming down State Street, for there had not been a horse about for several days. When the fire broke out, the engines were slow in reaching the fire because of this disease among the horses. However, when they got there, they did their work as well as they could. When the great stores of goods had been burned and the fire reached nearly to State Street, it struck a great liquor house in Exchange Place, and there the owner said: "It is a pity that all this good wine and liquor should be lost; come in and take a drink, anybody who wants to." In consequence of this, many of the firemen were drunk. However, the fire was well fought in all directions, especially by C. F. Hovey and Company, where one of the principal partners was most energetic, and saved that shop and that block of buildings.

Seven or eight nights after the fire was out I passed in the

office with one or two of the clerks. The police were very busy, and the town seemed to be disorganized for the time. By degrees they recovered from their calamity, and things moved on.

Major Higginson's testimony before the Commissioners appointed to investigate the cause of the fire and the efforts made for its suppression deals in detail with the question of using powder.<sup>1</sup> He had procured the powder, it seems, under the direction of General Benham of the United States Army; but there were violent differences of opinion between General Benham, the Mayor, the Chief Engineer, and the firemen, as to whether buildings should be blown up before the fire actually reached them.

The bringing of that powder up State Street [testified Major Higginson] struck me as a horrible thing to do, but there was nothing else to be done. I was told to do it, and I did it. We drove by a couple of engines, and stopped about twenty feet from them, and took this powder out. . . . I bothered the Mayor almost to death, I suppose, that night. The last time I was there, it was about sunrise. I begged him to cut this path by blowing from Washington Street to the Post Office, and then down to the water.

*Question* (by Mr. Firth). Looking back upon it, what do you think now of the use of powder, as it was used that night?

*Answer* (by H. L. H.). I should think it helped the firemen to get at the fire and to extinguish it; but it seemed to me that it was as badly used as it could be. I may be quite wrong, but I can't see any point in letting a building catch fire, and then blowing it down. I had supposed, and do now, that the point of the whole thing was to throw the buildings down and make a path before the fire got there, and keep it back.

<sup>1</sup> *Report of the Commissioners on the Great Fire in Boston* (Boston, 1873), pp. 598-605.

*Q.* Did you suggest that to General Benham, or anybody you saw?

*A.* I told the Mayor. I did n't tell General Benham, because he don't keep very quiet when there is any excitement. I knew him at the South. He gets a little worried. He ran around there, and seemed to have a worse time than anybody that morning.

That story of the frenzied owners of securities trying in vain to enter the Safe Deposit Vaults to rescue their own property, and prevented by those stubborn Higginsons, became one of the legends of State Street and an asset to the growing reputation of the firm. Colonel T. W. Higginson suggested that George Higginson's portrait ought to be painted, standing in the lurid light of the conflagration, with his back to the Safety Vaults, defying the "anxious mob of respectable capitalists"! But the colonel was incurably literary.

In the spring of 1873, after more than four years of laborious service to his firm, Henry Higginson took a real holiday. The Massachusetts Legislature appointed a Commission to visit the Vienna Exposition and report thereon. C. F. Adams was Chairman, and sailed in April, with his old regimental companions Greely Curtis and Higginson, the latter being one of the Honorary Commissioners. F. D. Millet, the Secretary of the Commission, was already in Europe. A more joyous quartette for a junket it would have been difficult to find. The three colonels (although Higginson never used his brevet title) advanced promptly upon Paris. Adams went on to Vienna, while Curtis and Higginson visited Venice. But they were back in Paris for the month of June, shopping vigorously for their absent wives, and cultivating the theatre. "I live quite by myself," the Major wrote home, "go to the theatre a great deal, read and write (a little) French and take two lessons a day in the hope of reviving my faded knowledge. I shun all the Americans and do not leave my address any-

where. . . . I've been to the *Français* a great deal." He describes with much detail the acting of Got, Mme. Favart, M<sup>es</sup>. Reichemberg and Peirson, and a new actress, Sarah Bernhardt — "fascinating, wonderful. . . . I took a glass to watch her. . . . Very little beauty, thin as a rail, handsome eyes and nice hair — if her own — head well placed."

Henry Adams and his wife ("Clover" Hooper) were in Paris, and Mrs. Adams helped Higginson in buying furniture for the Commonwealth Avenue house, then building, and in dress-making commissions from the Major's wife, who was an old friend of Mrs. Adams. Higginson went to London for a few days with the Adamses, and dined with J. R. Lowell, "very bright and charming. He had just been to Oxford to receive his degree." He sold a good many American securities, incidentally, in London, and saw much of Sir Thomas Brassey, William Malcolm, and other British investors and bankers. "I believe I could build up a capital business between here and America — simply investing money for safe people."

Early in July he was at Lausanne, making the acquaintance of his Agassiz relatives — fifty of them at one wedding party, all talking delightfully in French and German at him at once. "Then I got back to Berne, where I talked with Harry James until one o'clock in the night." Finally he reached Vienna, after thirteen years absence.

I am delighted [he writes] with several things here. In the first and least place I'm very glad to find that I can talk German with entire volubility, pretty well (two people said "better than when I went away" — ridiculous!), and with tolerable correctness. I need words for new subjects sometimes, and have n't such a choice as I once had. Then, of course, I'm pleased very much to be so kindly and affectionately received by all and to find that I've not been forgotten during this eighth of a century — egotistical, is n't it? but very pleasant for one who prizes friends. Then too I'm greatly pleased to see

how sundry men, whom I knew, have grown larger and better. One of them is director of the opera, another is sub-director, another leader of the orchestra, etc., and the chief of the Conservatorium, which is greatly improved. Epstein is the piano-professor at the Conservatorium, and *the pianist of Vienna*. I wish he could come for a trip to America.

He now visited the Exposition "industriously," yet not, it appears, too industriously. "The white wines suit me admirably, and the weather is charming. . . . I heard Strauss's people play in the Volks-garten. Though Johann Strauss did n't lead, but a brother, yet we had the old swing and spring."

Ten days later he is back in London, studying the annual Royal Exhibition of paintings. "I do think the whole lot inferior to the French show, though James Lowell, who ought to know, and Henry Adams, who does know . . . thought them better." His comments on France and Prussia, in this letter to his wife, contain a prophecy:—

The French are trying to learn something. . . . They've taken their whipping, borne their trials well, paid their money punctually, got rid of the accursed German (you'd swear yourself to see those Prussian helmets in the French towns), and except that they're training for another war, they're all right. . . . I would n't in any case be a Prussian. "Pride goes before a fall." It 'll be some time, but *Prussia will get hit hard some day*.

And then, in mid-August from Paris, just before sailing, he writes this to his father, in strange contrast to his light talk about white wines and Strauss waltzes and actresses and picture-shows:—

My real regret down-town, beyond my own ability to regulate my life well and to do much without so much worry to

me, is, that I don't gain wisdom much. To lose money is no such serious matter, but to see clearly that one *will* lose and to act accordingly in due season to avoid it — that is worth working for; and when shall I get it? Another thing came to me clearly one day in London: "*We can't serve God and Mammon,*" which always had a distinct enough meaning for me, but — if one wishes a thing very much indeed and works and struggles for it, one is likely to lose balance a little and may sacrifice better things. You have preserved your honesty entirely thro' a long and hard life, and it is a wonder. Well, perhaps one reason has been that you've cared more to keep your balance and your honesty than to get money, and the same is true of Uncle Harry, and the same is true of the Barings — and the same is *not* true of X——, I fear, tho' no one can say that he has sinned.

To-day [August 16; his mother's birthday] is to be remembered always — and has been here. Sixty-two years old — and 24 years since she died. It is a great while, and has been a great deal longer for you than for us, and I am older than mother was. You have had a hard life — certainly not without its joys too, but still a hard and dry life, which is all the more reason for my being at home soon. How well I remember the last summer of mother's life! It is as distinct as possible to me, as clear as if it had just passed, and how she sent some sweet peas to Lydia Storrow for the coffin of a baby that died in the summer.

He was back in State Street in September, just in time to face the panic of 1873. He had noted the business depression all over Europe, and particularly in Vienna, but had felt no immediate anxiety. Yet the United States had been over-trading. The paramount cause of the panic, in the opinion of James Ford Rhodes,<sup>1</sup> was excessive railroad construction, ever since the completion of the Union Pacific in 1869. It had

<sup>1</sup> *History of the United States*, vol. 7, pp. 37-53.

absorbed a large part of the circulating capital of the country and all the money that could be borrowed abroad. And now the money market grew tight. The failure of Jay Cooke and Co., who had financed the Northern Pacific, came on September 18. The next day Fisk and Hatch, backers of the Chesapeake and Ohio, went down. Wall Street was in terror, and the New York Stock Exchange was closed for eight days. Wholesale failures followed, and there was no genuine revival of business until 1878.

"These five years [1873-1878]," says Mr. Rhodes, "are a long dismal tale of declining markets, exhaustion of capital, a lowering in value of all kinds of property, including real estate, constant bankruptcies, close economy in business and grinding frugality in living, idle mills, furnaces and factories, former profit-earning iron mills reduced to the value of a scrap-heap, laborers out of employment, reductions of wages, strikes and lockouts, the great railroad riots of 1877, suffering of the unemployed, depression and despair."

It was an anxious five years for Lee, Higginson and Co., but the anchor held. The firm had solid resources, and the money Henry Higginson had raised in London in 1873 came just in time. John M. Forbes's handling of the finances of the C. B. and Q. and the Burlington and Missouri — roads in which the firm was interested — was masterly.<sup>1</sup> Calumet and Hecla never passed a dividend. The old Boston merchants had confidence in the Lees and Higginsons, and stood by them. An illustration may be found in a long letter dictated by Henry Higginson on the day of his death, November 14, 1919, to Professor Barrett Wendell: —

In the panic of 1873, some notes of two young men who were wards of Mr. Frank Lowell came to us, or rather Mr. Lowell brought them to us to sell, he endorsing them. Mr. Lowell was

<sup>1</sup> See *An American Railroad Builder — John Murray Forbes*, by H. G. Pearson, Boston, 1911.

of the highest kind of type, and had a fair amount of money. He took the notes to Edward Austin, in whose office I had worked for eighteen months after leaving college. He looked and sniffed and said, "Huh, Frank Lowell — a single name — after all, those young men do not count; wonder what would happen if Frank Lowell died." Said I, "John Gardner would pay the notes, sir." Said he, "Go and ask him"; so I walked down to Mr. Gardner and told him the story. Mr. Gardner said at once: "Tell Edward Austin I will pay every note that Frank Lowell ever made," and the sale went through. I tell you, the Gardners are high-minded gentlemen all the way through — scrupulous, careful, bold, not afraid of the devil.

But the strain of the panic told on George Higginson, and at the end of April, 1874, his sons persuaded him to give up his active membership in the firm. He was seventy and had been in business from the age of twelve. He lived fifteen years longer, and could not keep entirely away from State Street; but the days of his real warfare were now accomplished.

A new partner, Charles A. Whittier, had been admitted to the firm on January 1, 1873 — a dashing figure, who was, until he suddenly left the firm in 1888, an idol of the market-place. His earlier activities were highly useful to Lee, Higginson and Co. Henry Higginson, in his *Reminiscences*, thus pictures the "good years" which succeeded the panic: —

Business went on, up and down; we took hold of certain lines of railroad bonds, bought and sold them, and increased our business in that way. By and by we resumed specie payments, and then came a period of speculation. As Frank Higginson and Whittier were very bright, a large business was developed, and while I was abroad again in 1878, they got a large order in Atchison shares and made a great deal of money for our customers and for the firm; in fact, we were the principal men in the Stock Exchange at that time. The Burlington and

Missouri Railroad in Nebraska was also being developed at that time, as settlers in Nebraska were buying lands, and the bonds were being paid off; and there again we had great success for our customers and for ourselves. Whittier was very clever indeed in the Stock Exchange, was "king pin." . . . Frank was very keen and able, managed the financial side, and kept things in excellent order. We had several very remunerative years, and made a good deal of money.

In the summer of 1878 Mr. Higginson was in London, Paris, and Berlin again, seeing many friends and visiting picture exhibitions and the opera. He heard Patti for the first time: "She combines more than anyone known to me. In Vienna they told me that she was the first artist of the day, and they're right. She sings, intonates, vocalizes, enunciates, plays, looks charmingly, and her voice goes right into one's heart." He had one very happy Sunday at Preston Hall, Aylesford, with the Brasseys:—

Passing the Sunday in a lovely place, quietly and idly. A great stretch of smooth green meadow, dotted with great oaks, elms and chestnuts, deer feeding or lying in the shade (hundred or two deer); beyond, a greater stretch of meadow yellow with buttercups in which beautiful great cows are feeding; just beyond, the Medway flowing unseen and unmarked except by a boat with a huge red sail just passing before my eyes — and on the other bank a charming old Carmelite monastery, tower and church and a brown village. Beyond lie rising meadows fringed with trees, and then high hills, half-bare, half-wooded. The house is a huge building of gray stone built thirty years ago, stretching along a great terrace with a few little beds in the garden and a fountain — below it a balustrade of stone. The great house has a high great hall on entering, a high dining-room hung with old armor and weapons, with some good carving in it, and a high billiard-room, where the men sit and smoke and chat. About twelve guests are now here.

This was the first of many visits in English country houses.

Those "good years" that brought him such friendships and rapidly increasing business success brought also joy and grief into his private life. His father-in-law, Professor Louis Agassiz, had died on December 14, 1873, and only eight days later the wife of Alexander Agassiz died also. Henry Higginson's daughter Cécile, whom he idolized with the passion of an intensely emotional nature, died in 1875. Those who knew him intimately were aware that he carried the secret sorrow with him till his death. In 1876, his son Alexander was born, and the yearning solicitude of the father followed every waking and sleeping instant of the boy's life. But such things as these elude biography. "There are moments in life," said Turgenev, "there are feelings . . . we can only indicate them — and pass by."

When Henry Higginson was a very old man, his mind dwelt often upon the first decades of his experience in State Street. He realized then the years of peculiar strain, the critical periods in the firm's existence. He loved to talk of Colonel Harry Lee, who "was our one large capitalist in dangerous times. In those times he was always cheerful and full of courage. When the seas were smooth, he was not in such good spirits."

He wrote in 1915: "From 1868 until 1898 there were these constant frights and uncertainties, which gave gamblers a great chance if they could guess right, and which kept decent men in doubt and often in agony. They could not do business in a proper way, and I look back on all those years with horror." He dwelt often upon "the desperate years from 1891 to 1898," and going back still further, upon "the Villard troubles" and the "Union Pacific troubles." "There was a great deal of soda-water in business at that time, grave doubts, great extravagance and certainly great waste. It was an education, but a very painful one." He talked much, also, of the "silver craze," the failure of Baring Brothers, and the panic of 1893, when "things broke loose and were horrible" — "as bad a time as I

have ever seen"; and the panic of 1907 — when "we lived through it after a good deal of suffering."

But there were ancient triumphs, as well as agonies, upon which he often spoke freely: how "Jim Storrow [the elder] battled the watch for the Telephone Company, beat the Western Union — which was very strong — and established the patents for the Bell Telephone Company; and he was helped by Bill Forbes, who thought very little of himself, but was stiff and brave; and Vail was a remarkable man; and it was those three men who made the Telephone Company with the aid of many others";<sup>1</sup> how his friend Charles Coffin, that "wonderful trader," had succeeded in the difficult negotiations that led to the formation of the General Electric Company; how his friend C. E. Perkins, of the C. B. and Q., had, single-handed, saved the banks of Nebraska from disaster.

He had fascinating stories, too, of dreams that had come to nothing: of fabulous silver mines; of coal and iron properties, the only flaw in the perfection of which was the lack of coal and iron; of rainbow-hued bubbles like Duck Creek and the Cottonham plantation. He had a soft spot in his heart for "promoters," visionaries, gamblers, and was never more delightful than in recounting some successful swindle upon himself. And in truth, to the very end, he was quite willing, in spite of many a "burnt finger," to take any legitimate chance once more. When he was over eighty he wrote to his old friend General C. J. Paine, — who was too much interested in golf, the Major thought, to give proper attention to the market, — urging him to take a venture in some Sugar bonds. "You ought really to attend more carefully to business and not sit and reflect on your past glory." The Major's stenographer must have caught the twinkle in his eye.

But it is not the purpose of the present chapter to trace the detailed history of Lee, Higginson and Company beyond 1881. With the founding of the Symphony Orchestra, in that year,

<sup>1</sup> Letter to Professor Barrett Wendell, Nov. 14, 1919.

Major Higginson began his rôle as public benefactor; and though everyone knew he was a banker and broker, men began to think of him primarily as a patron of the arts, as a philanthropist. Yet it was his partnership in Lee, Higginson and Co. that made his philanthropies possible. It widened immensely the scope of his mental activities and his personal friendships. It affected his judgment of men, his views of political and economic questions. It exercised a steadily moulding pressure upon his character. It will be impossible, therefore, to tell the story of his later life without frequent allusion to the firm of which he was so long an important member. It must suffice here to indicate in the briefest fashion the later changes in the personnel of the firm and the extension of its activities.

In 1880 Mr. Charles Fairchild had been admitted as a partner, and remained until 1894. Mr. F. L. Higginson, after invaluable services, retired from partnership in 1885. In that year Mr. James Jackson joined the firm. He died in 1900. Gardiner M. Lane was admitted to partnership in 1892, and Mr. George L. Peabody and Mr. Harry K. White in 1898. In that year Colonel Henry Lee died, leaving George C. Lee, who had joined the firm in 1853, as the senior partner. His son, George C. Lee, Jr., and Mr. James J. Storrow, were admitted to partnership in 1900.

"At the beginning of the present century, then," says Professor Wendell in his sketch of Lee, Higginson and Co., "the firm seemed strong in men. Mr. George Lee was still vigorous, Mr. Henry Higginson was at his best. Mr. James Jackson still seemed almost young, and Mr. Lane and Mr. Peabody were actually so. Fifteen years later . . . all of them but Mr. Higginson were dead, and Mr. White had long left the business. Such losses must in any event have meant a certain break in the continuity of personal tradition. This happened to coincide with a general alteration in the character of the business. The general character of American business, indeed, altered almost everywhere. The period of promotion was, on the whole,

past. The problem was no longer, as a rule, to interest large investors in enterprises which would involve considerable risks and if successful should result in great profits. It was rather, and increasingly, to find a great number of comparatively small investors and to place before them unquestionably sound securities. . . . The period in the history of the firm since 1900 is on the whole as distinct from that between 1868 and 1900 as that period was from those which came earlier."

Major Higginson adapted himself, with more flexibility of mind than is usual with men past seventy, to these inevitable changes in method and in personnel. He was very proud and fond of the dozen or more younger partners who had been admitted to the firm since 1906; proud of the establishment of the Chicago and New York offices of Lee, Higginson and Co., and of the record of the firm of Higginson and Co. in London. During the World War he was constantly writing and talking about the efficiency of these younger partners in connection with the Red Cross, the Liberty Loans, and other services to the community and the nation. He felt that the old firm was still meeting its obligations, financial and moral, that it was contributing to the welfare of the United States, and helping to safeguard the interests of civilization. In the last summer of his life, Major Higginson made one or two brief talks to the school for bond-salesmen, organized by Lee, Higginson and Co. for the training of their younger employees. Not often, surely, has a senior partner, in his eighty-fifth year, given more ripe and laconic admonitions. He was talking to boys, but the abrupt sentences condensed the long years of experience in State Street:—

The house has always tried to do its work well and to have and keep a high character, and I think it has succeeded in those points. Character is the foundation-stone of such a business, and once lost, is not easily regained. . . . Now, for yourselves: Do not lose a day; use your time well, remembering

that that day never comes again; know your business, and tell the story just as it is; find out the truth about the bonds and shares; if a bond is pretty good, say so; if it is first-class, say that; if it is attractive from a speculator's point of view, say that. Put the "cards on the table" every time, and do not bore buyers. If you are roughly treated, never mind. Good men are not infrequently out of temper or very busy, and do not care to see you. Remember this about truth: you must know your subject in order to speak truly; and although making a mistake is not the same thing as deceiving, still you are responsible for the facts, and, therefore, for the truth. Do not waste your time. Keep your temper. Play the game decently, and be faithful.

This does not sound much like weeping on the doorstep!

## CHAPTER X

### THE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

(1881-1914)<sup>1</sup>

All good work takes time and life-blood — and shows us why most of us must live long to do a real piece of work. — H. L. H. to A. W. THAYER, *July 21, 1887.*

Welche grosse Opfer bringst Du der Musik! Dein Name wird nicht vergessen werden. Dein alter Verehrer und Freund, JULIUS EPSTEIN. — To H. L. H., *July 15, 1914.*

The orchestra sprang from the faith of my youth and has been the faith of my life and of my old age. — From H. L. H.'s penciled memoranda for his farewell address, *May 4, 1918.*

No one knows the precise hour when Henry Higginson first dreamed his dream of founding a Symphony Orchestra in Boston. But again and again, in the closing years of his life, he stated that the idea came to him during his student days in Vienna.<sup>2</sup> The Civil War and the struggle for a livelihood forced his energies into other channels for a time, and it was not until the spring of 1881, following two or three years of marked success in business, that he was able at last to carry out his intention. No clearer statement of his purposes can be made than is contained in his address to the members of the Symphony Orchestra on April 27, 1914, in his eightieth year:—

GENTLEMEN:—

Sixty years ago I wished to be a musician, and therefore went to Vienna, where I studied two years and a half diligently, learned something of music, something about musicians, and one other thing — that I had no talent for music. I heard

<sup>1</sup> The story of the Symphony Orchestra during the World War will be told briefly in the concluding chapter.

<sup>2</sup> In a letter of Dec. 2, 1917, to President Eliot, he gives the date as 1857.

there and in other European cities the best orchestras, and much wished that our own country should have such fine orchestras. Coming home at the end of 1860, I found our country in trouble, and presently in a great war. Naturally I took part in the war, at the end of which time I did various things, and at last came to our present office in State Street, where I was admitted as a partner.

For many years I had hard work to earn my living and support my wife. Originally I had had a very small sum of money, which had been used up while studying in Vienna and during the war. All these years I watched the musical conditions in Boston, hoping to make them better. I believed that an orchestra of excellent musicians under one head and devoted to a single purpose could produce fine results, and wished for the ability to support such an undertaking; for I saw that it was impossible to give music at fair prices and make the Orchestra pay expenses.

After consulting with some European friends, I laid out a plan, and at the end of two very good years of business began concerts in the fall of 1881. It seemed best to undertake the matter single-handed, and, beyond one fine gift from a dear friend, I have borne the costs alone. All this is a matter of record, and yet it may interest you. It seemed clear that an orchestra of fair size and under possible conditions would cost at least \$20,000 a year more than the public would pay. Therefore, I expected this deficit each year, and faced contracts with seventy men and a conductor. It was a large sum of money, which depended on my business each year and on the public. If the concert halls were filled, that would help me; if my own business went well, that would help me; and the truth is, that the great public has stood by me nobly.

In my eyes the requisites about the Orchestra were these: to leave the choice and care of the musicians, the choice and care of the music, the rehearsals and direction of the Orchestra, to the conductor, giving him every power possible; to

leave to an able manager the business affairs of the enterprise; and on my part, to pay the bills, to be satisfied with nothing short of perfection, and always to remember that we were seeking high art and not money: art came first, then the good of the public, and the money must be an after consideration.

We began with Mr. Henschel as a conductor, taking the musicians of this town. I told Mr. Henschel that the Orchestra should play under one leader and only one, to learn his ways and to get the proper discipline; and he agreed with me. He conducted the Orchestra with much success for three years, during which time he drew a few men from Europe. He and the Orchestra worked hard, and gave us fair results.

Then I engaged in Vienna Mr. Gericke, who came here for five years, brought in his second year many good musicians from Europe, and really created our Orchestra. He became a great favorite with the public, which was very sorry to lose him. After Mr. Gericke came Mr. Nikisch, who did much brilliant work during four years; but, owing to a tempting offer from Europe, he left us and was succeeded by Mr. Paur, who stayed five years. He also gave us good concerts, and then Mr. Gericke came back for eight years, which many of you will remember well. He found the Orchestra in excellent condition, and, with his skill and admirable taste, brought it to a high pitch. Then came Dr. Muck for two years, then for three years Mr. Fiedler, to whom we also owe many beautiful concerts, and now Dr. Muck is here again.

Mr. Ellis suggested the summer concerts, in order to give more work to the members of the Orchestra; and this step met a want which was keenly felt. Mr. Gericke suggested the system of pensions, which was put in force and has given help to many past members of the Orchestra, and must be a comfort to you gentlemen of the Orchestra to-day as something to look forward to when you leave off work.

For the term of thirty-three years the total deficit is about

\$900,000. My friends have begged me again and again to stop the concerts because the strain was too great; but the work has gone on, and the result is the present beautiful Orchestra, of which we all are proud.

We had been driven out of the old Music Hall in Hamilton Place because the city planned to put a street through the hall, and I welcomed the change, as the old hall was not well-aired, and was not very safe. Friends built the present hall, which I leased for a long term of years, as we must have it free for our use at all times. The hall is not rented so much as we could wish, the costs of keeping it in order are large, and therefore the yearly deficit ranges from \$13,000 to \$19,000.

Now what does each of us do for the Orchestra? Dr. Muck chooses the music, prepares everything for the public, conducts the rehearsals and the concerts. Each of you gentlemen does his part excellently, and each of you is as well treated as lies in my power. My part is to run the risk of each year's contracts, and to meet the deficit, which never will fall below \$20,000 yearly, and is often more. At present we have good luck in cities other than Boston, but it is a luck on which we cannot count, for good orchestras exist everywhere, and presently we may not be needed beyond our home. In Boston I have to take my luck, which thus far has been good; but there is always a chance, and you have only to reckon how many contracts I must sign, to see what a heavy burden would be on my shoulders if the concerts were not successful, and the audiences were small. Pray remember that I must go to my office daily, in order to earn money enough to carry on this enterprise yearly and to accumulate \$1,000,000, on the interest of which the Orchestra will depend after my death.<sup>1</sup> I do not wish to make too much of this point, but if our concerts were to cease, my work could cease, as my friends wish;

<sup>1</sup> Ultimately Mr. Higginson was compelled to abandon this long-cherished plan. See chap. XIV.

and please bear in mind that I shall be eighty years old next autumn.

There is the story. I am content and happy to go on with my work, and fully expect to get together enough money to carry on the Orchestra long after my death, if it is wanted; but without peace we cannot have a noble orchestra, and we cannot keep our reputation without excellent work by high-grade artists and as good a conductor as exists. All these things we have now; but if we do not have a peaceful life, it will drive me out of this business, and will destroy the Orchestra.

We have had to dismiss various men for good reasons, and we have replaced them by able, conscientious musicians — real artists, who play for the joy of the music. Do not suppose that I am ignorant about the various members of the orchestra. At one time I knew every man; and if that is not the case now, I know many of you, and listen carefully to the playing of this or that man; know well when Witek is doing his best, hear Ferir, hear Warnke, never miss a tone of Longy or Maquarre or Grisez or Wendler or Sadony; I know very well what the trumpets are doing, and the trombones, and watch the drummer, and listen for the tuba; I watch with pleasure the double basses as they stand behind you all. We lost Schuecker last year, and have in his place an admirable artist whose skill gives us much pleasure. In short, I watch the musicians almost too much, for it often interferes with my pleasure, thinking whether they are playing their best, and listening for the various points instead of listening for the whole. Whenever I go to a concert, there is always a sense of responsibility on my mind, and there is always great joy.

Gentlemen, to sum up: You see that I know your work, and now you know mine; I know your share, and know that you try to give us the best music in the best way; and on my part, I try to make your position as comfortable as possible. It would be a great pleasure to raise your pay to a still higher point, but I cannot.

One last word. Ever since my boyhood I have longed to have a part in some good work which would leave a lasting mark in the world. To-day we have a noble orchestra — the work of our hands — which gives joy and comfort to many people. Dr. Muck and I are glad to do our part, and, with your hearty coöperation, the work will last.

The frank simplicity of this story as told by Major Higginson needs no praise. But to estimate the full significance of his service to the cause of music, and the personal conditions under which that service was rendered, we must now go back to 1881, and to the inception of the great enterprise. Mr. Howe's admirable history of the Orchestra<sup>1</sup> covers the first thirty-three years of its existence. To his accurate and spirited record of that period there is little to be added, except some reminiscences by Major Higginson, written or spoken subsequently to 1914, and a few extracts from the ample bundle of Orchestra correspondence. It must be remembered that for many decades Mr. Higginson was carrying a great weight of business responsibilities, of philanthropic services to Harvard and other institutions, and of community activities of a hundred kinds, in addition to the load of the Orchestra. All these things were on his mind at the same time, and being given to speaking his mind freely, his general correspondence is full of references to Orchestra matters. It is characteristic of him that, on the back of an important letter from Mr. Henschel, there are penciled jottings about the day's work in State Street, — "Sell for our account 3000 C. & B. 6<sup>o</sup> at 105," — and that between two important business letters in his copying-files there should be a curt cablegram to Mr. Gericke in Vienna: "Engagiren Sie niemand mehr."

It is now more than forty years since that March afternoon

<sup>1</sup> *The Boston Symphony Orchestra, An Historical Sketch*, by M. A. DeWolfe Howe, Boston and New York, 1914.

in 1881, when Mr. Higginson met Mr. Henschel at the house of Mrs. George D. Howe, at 17 Marlborough Street, and revealed his plan of founding an orchestra in Boston. Three noteworthy facts must be kept in mind, if we would measure the significance of that conversation. The first is the long preliminary brooding over the project, the tenacious holding to a youthful resolve. Mr. Higginson's wisest counselor in Europe was his old "chum," Julius Epstein of Vienna, who had become a famous professor at the Conservatory, and knew the foremost musicians in Austria and Germany. Out of a friendship which began in the eighteen-fifties and lasted until after the World War, Professor Epstein was able to render the most valuable service to the Orchestra from the very beginning.

The second fact, skillfully narrated by Mr. Howe, is the forty-years' preparation of the Boston musical public. Mr. Higginson could not have obeyed his friend Mrs. Fanny Kemble's injunction to "plant flowers in the great corn-field of America" if the soil had not been ready for him. It had all counted: J. S. Dwight's dream of "an orchestra worthy to execute the grand works of Haydn and Mozart," set forth in the "Dial" for July, 1840; the Academy of Music concerts in the eighteen-forties; the concerts of the Musical Fund Society and the Germania Orchestra in the fifties; the building of the Music Hall in 1852; the fine concerts of the Harvard Musical Association and the Philharmonic Society, under the leadership of Carl Zerrahn, for the seventeen years previous to 1881; and the early visits of Theodore Thomas's Orchestra to Boston.<sup>1</sup> Neither the seed-time nor the harvest failed.

And the third fact to be remembered is the swift audacity with which Mr. Higginson acted, as soon as his mind was made up. To engage Mr. Henschel, a brilliant musician with

<sup>1</sup> See Howe, *op. cit.*, chap. I, and the article by J. S. Dwight in the *Memorial History of Boston*, edited by Justin Winsor, 1880-81.

but little experience as a conductor, was running an indubitable risk. To undertake, single-handed, the support of an orchestra by his yearly earnings in State Street was an act of daring. Judged by ordinary standards of financial prudence, the founding and sustaining of the Symphony Orchestra was a reckless undertaking. But it was precisely the sort of unselfish recklessness which endeared the Major to his friends. It belonged, somehow, with his erect soldierly bearing, with his abrupt vigorous speech, with the sabre-scar across his finely modeled face.

This temperamental rashness, however, was only one side of a singularly many-sided man. The formal announcement of the enterprise, made by Mr. Higginson in the newspapers on March 30, 1881, and the long statement of the details of his scheme, entitled "*In re the Boston Symphony Orchestra,*"<sup>1</sup> reveal a carefully perfected plan, elaborated with minute attention to details, and with shrewd insight into human nature. The test of its soundness lies in the simple fact that the plan has worked, in all its essential features, from the very beginning. In the words of Mr. Howe, written in 1914: "The very details of the plan which Mr. Higginson put into words in the spring of 1881, before a single concert was given, have, to an extraordinary degree, been carried out. Except for the change of method in the sale of tickets, the inevitable advance of prices, and the substitution of nominal for actual rehearsals on Friday afternoons, it is hard to name any modifications of the original scheme which have not been developments rather than changes in its provisions." Never, in short, in all the rest of his life, did Henry Higginson exhibit more strikingly his capacity for straight, hard thinking.

And mingled with the hard thinking there was delicate sentiment, and the ever-present thought of his friends who had been sacrificed in the Civil War. He wrote to Miss Frances R. Morse, on September 18, 1881:—

<sup>1</sup> Howe, *op. cit.*, pp. 27-34.

I had a noble set of men-friends and loved them much and lived on them. They led me in part to thoughts and hopes which have resulted in this scheme. It seems to me to be worth while, and to be a little gravestone to them if anything, for they are all dead but one — a great loss to me and the world. To these friends I tried to give everything, because my belief was that one cannot do or give or take too much from a friend.

Older Bostonians remember vividly the excitement produced by Mr. Henschel's first season. He was only thirty-one, and he had the enthusiasm, the glamour, the daring of youth. Most of Mr. Higginson's friends were inclined to agree with John C. Bancroft, who had written in March: —

"I can't but think that for an experiment like yours Henschel must be the right type of man. I have only heard him sing and accompany himself and others, but he does both in such a masterly way, with so much fire, tenderness and poetry, and there is so much charm in his own compositions, that he is evidently a musician of exceeding fine fibre, and as you have seen him leading an orchestra to your satisfaction, it gives a well-rounded view of him. I cannot believe there will be any commonplace playing under a leader of that type. I don't think anyone could prophesy now how your experiment will work or what it may not lead to if successful — possibly great musical things for Boston in the future. Certainly it is something more than founding a first-class orchestra. . . ."

The seventy men directed by the new conductor were for the most part, it must be remembered, also players in the concerts of the Harvard Musical Association and the Philharmonic Society. It was natural that both players and public should compare Henschel, favorably or unfavorably, with Zerrahn and Maas. There were skeptics and scoffers, whose comments are amusingly quoted by Mr. Howe; but the twenty concerts under Mr. Henschel proved, on the whole, an amazing success.

Many of us remember the long waiting line of ticket-buyers in Hamilton Place, crowding the entrance to the old Music Hall; the endless debates over the conductor's programme-making: the joy of the Wagnerians and the wrath of the anti-Wagnerians, the puzzlement over Brahms. In the second season the number of Boston concerts was increased to twenty-six, and the Cambridge concerts — an integral part of Mr. Higginson's plan from the first — began. There were concerts, too, in many other New England cities, and the business arrangements grew steadily more complicated in consequence. Mr. John P. Lyman served valiantly as a volunteer treasurer. Mr. Higginson had secured the control of Music Hall, and Mr. Charles A. Ellis soon began his long service as manager.

When Mr. Henschel, at the end of his third season, returned to Europe and to his own career as a singer, the Symphony Orchestra had firmly established itself. The Orchestra correspondence of those three years still retains "the freshness of the early world." Here are Mr. Lyman's first designs for tickets, suggestions for newspaper advertising, records of the first struggles with speculators, and tentative lists for complimentary seats. Early in the third season (November 20, 1883) Mr. Lyman is able to report, in view of the probability that Mr. Henschel would not return for another season: —

"I am convinced that the Boston Symphony Orchestra is the head and Henschel the tail of the beast. You may be surprised that I should think it worth while to say this; but former years I have been in doubt whether people went to hear the Boston Symphony Orchestra or to hear the result of Henschel's conducting: for you must remember that he was a much persecuted man in 1881, and that sympathy and curiosity are powerful agents. But now, in the fine results that he has attained, his triumph has been achieved, popular sentimentality has in a large measure died out and people have come to regard the Orchestra as the main attraction, though the two are yet closely connected. If the new man has a wide and established

reputation, he can begin where Henschel left off and perhaps do more."

On December 2, 1883, Mr. Ellis wrote to Mr. Higginson, who was then in Europe:—

"One third of our season is now over, and I am glad to write that the concerts have all been successful — we have not yet had a poor house in or out of Boston. I wish you could hear one concert — the Orchestra is stronger and plays very much better than ever before, and Mr. Henschel deserves great credit for it. Many of the men now say he has no superior as a conductor, and I am sure every one of them will be sorry when he goes. . . .

"Mr. Cotting wants us to give some light summer concerts: he proposes to decorate Music Hall with plants, etc., making a kind of garden of it, and will either rent it to us at a low rate, or for a percentage of receipts sharing the risk with us. I believe such a series would go. I talked last summer with Mr. Listemann about it, and he said the men would be glad to accept at a small salary (say \$18 a week) a summer engagement that would keep them at home. There are enough people in Boston summer evenings with nothing to do who would support such concerts."

There are many letters from Julius Epstein, who followed every phase of the Orchestra's development with the keenest professional and personal interest. But it is the letters in the bold hand of Sir George Henschel, which bring back most vividly the beginnings of the Orchestra. On March 17, 1881, he is considering — with a thoughtfulness imitated by all of his successors — the question of salary. A week later he is ready to sign the contract, and thinks "The Symphony Orchestra of Boston; Conductor, Mr. George Henschel, would be the best title after all." The next letter touches a point destined to become later a matter of long controversy: "We are gradually coming to my original proposition, *viz.*: to simply engage

the men and not to care at all what they are doing besides our work. I assure you that is the best thing we can do, and if you have any confidence in my judgment, pray drop all conditions in the contract except those relating to our own welfare. I mean now the conditions of discipline, etc."

In July Mr. Henschel writes from Germany at great length, controverting a Boston "Transcript" critic, who had maintained that the Music Hall was too large for successful orchestra concerts, defending Henschel's own theory of "mixed programmes," and telling of his success in selecting the musical library for the Orchestra. "The money I have spent for the complete library will not exceed two hundred and fifty pounds, but it will be one of the finest and most complete libraries in existence."<sup>1</sup> Less than forty years afterward, the value of the Symphony Orchestra Library was estimated at \$100,000! In later letters of that summer Mr. Henschel describes the exact height of the conductor's platform, the probable cost of the coming season's soloists, and answers suggestions that Mr. Higginson had evidently made about programmes. "2. 'Nicht zu viel Wagner.' Be sure I will always remember, as you say, what different people need. I spent a most delightful three days with Brahms near Vienna. He was delighted with the catalogue of our library and the idea of our giving lighter music in the second part of the concert."

Mr. Higginson's letters to Mr. Henschel, throughout his engagement, are tactful, friendly, and generous.

During the last winter of Mr. Henschel's engagement Mr.

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Henschel's list of the year 1881 is subjoined, for the benefit of music-lovers of the present day: "The catalogue is now complete and contains over 50 symphonies, 80 overtures and 90 miscellaneous works, — the names of the best representatives of the German, French, Italian, Hungarian, Bohemian, Danish, English and Russian schools, namely: Abert, Adam, Auber, J. S. Bach, Ph. E. Bach, Bargiel, Beethoven, Bennett, Berlioz, Boieldieu, Boccherini, Brahms, Bruch, Cherubini, Delibes, Dvořák, Gade, Glinka, Glück, Goldmark, Gounod, Grammann, Grimm, Handel, Haydn, Hérold, Hiller, Lachner, Lully, Liszt, Méhul, Massenet, Mendelssohn, Meyerbeer, Monsigny, Mozart, Raff, Reinecke, Rubinstein, Saint-Saëns, Schubert, Schumann, Söderman, Spohr, Spontini, Tschaikowsky, Volkmann, Wagner, and Weber."

Higginson was in Europe. He had gone over in June, 1883, with his wife and son, intending to stay a year, partly for business, partly for a holiday, — which he scarcely succeeded in getting, — and partly to secure a conductor to succeed Henschel. But the year was a troubled one. His wife and son fell ill; business obligations pressed him hard, and the negotiations for a conductor proved difficult. In October he was in Vienna, consulting with Epstein about the relative merits of Richter, Gericke, and Nikisch, and making the personal acquaintance of these artists. The negotiations dragged along. In December he wrote his father about Wagner operas: —

The whole list of these (except the last) has been given, and I've heard them all as a matter of education. They're very exhausting from their noise, length, and intricacy in form and in structure. They appeal far too much to the senses of various kinds, and I'm very glad they are past. The scenic effects are beyond belief, and the work of conductor [Richter and Gericke], Orchestra and singers is wonderful.

By January, 1884, he was in London, worried about the market. He writes to his father: —

I was going to ask you to sell some of your Calumet shares: 2300 is a great many, and good as they are, how can anyone tell to what price copper will go? I fear the market always. Don't you? Don't you also fear the upset likely to be caused by a low tariff, which has *got to come*? It may be sooner or later, but come it will. It will bother cotton and woolen goods and iron at least, and so it will bother our railroad. I'm glad to hear of the dividend on preferred shares, but I wish you would sell some of your stock, and I never could understand why you chose to keep so much. It looked clear to me that it must go down, but then I see wrong about six times in seven. I'm awfully perplexed by the whole situation.

Two days later he wrote to his wife, who was still in Vienna: "Our markets at home are as bad as I ever saw them — everyone selling right and left. It is simply cussed." On February 5: "Father writes me that I ought to go home and now Uncle H. and George Lee telegraph me the same. What can I do but go? And what will you do?" But a month went by before he could sail, and a few sentences from his letters to Mrs. Higginson give pleasanter pictures of his interests in London.

Harry James came in for a chat this noon. He is a good chap and agreeable. — Gordon reaches Khartoum in a day or two, and is very hopeful. Thank Heaven we've no foreign policy. "Mind your own business" is a good rule for nations, until they've an orderly house to show. — Mr. Bryce has just called on me and found me out. He left a kind card offering services, and it is much from a member of Parliament just now. — [Clarence] King leaves this evening for Paris, so I shall be still more alone. — John Morley, late of the "Pall Mall," is taking a prominent part in the House and much is expected of him. But Chamberlain and Dilke are the coming men, who will be at the front when Gladstone leaves work.

But his farewell note, on March 8, 1884, breathes disappointment with his various endeavors: "I have tried to do the work of a large man, and I'm a small man." He reached home just in time to hear Henschel's last concert, and then plunged into his tasks at State Street. The low price of copper had forced Calumet and Hecla to pass its dividend for the first time, and there were many other business anxieties. He worked feverishly hard, amused himself when he could by planting trees at "Sunset Hill," — his Manchester estate, — and had some pleasant drives with his father. He wrote long letters to Gericke, the new conductor, about engaging musicians in Europe; and by the time Mrs. Higginson returned, late in the summer, he was in a more cheerful mood.

Mr. Gericke's first term of service as conductor<sup>1</sup> is admirably described by Mr. Howe, who prints the interesting accounts of it given by Mr. Gericke as well as by Mr. Higginson. They need not be repeated here. It is sufficient to quote the well-known words, "Gericke made our Orchestra." His training and temperament were precisely what was needed for the necessary task of rendering the Orchestra "both homogeneous and expert." His programme-making was criticized, — like that of every conductor, — and the changes which his love of perfection made in the personnel of the Orchestra gave rise to some hard feeling among the superseded musicians. Before his second season began, he brought no less than twenty new players from Europe, many of them destined to win great renown. The "Pop" concerts began in the spring of 1885. In 1887 came the first concerts of the Orchestra in New York, and the first trip to the West. Mr. Gericke's patience and competence had triumphed, and when his first engagement came to a close, in the spring of 1889, and his admirers presented him with an album in recognition of their gratitude, the veteran lover of music, Mr. J. S. Dwight, inscribed upon the flyleaf: "To the Maker of the Boston Symphony Orchestra." Mr. Higginson's words, spoken at a farewell dinner to Mr. Gericke at the Tavern Club, are an eloquent summary of his services:<sup>2</sup> —

Coming from Vienna, whose very name rings with music, to our new country, he found an orchestra without the long-established traditions that are the very groundwork of artistic undertakings in Europe. The methods, the relations between leader and men, the general conditions were wholly new to him.

<sup>1</sup> For the convenience of the reader, the dates of the service of the various conductors of the Orchestra are given here: Henschel, 1881–1884; Gericke (first term), 1884–1889; Nikisch, 1889–1893; Paur, 1893–1898; Gericke (second term), 1898–1906; Muck (first term), 1906–1908; Fiedler, 1908–1912; Muck (second term), 1912–1918.

<sup>2</sup> Howe, *op. cit.*, p. 149.

The musicians were no longer young; were of various nations and of various habits; the climate was trying; the hall was too large for fine musical effects. The circumstances, in many respects, were unfavorable to good results. But he did not abate his zeal. He worked early and late with absolute fidelity to his task. He exacted an amount of practice which his men found trying, but which they came to recognize as the only means of success. He gave his three weekly performances month by month and year by year, under trials and against obstacles, always feeling that, work as he would, he could not reach the excellence of which he dreamed, and for which he ached. After Mr. Gericke had trained his Orchestra so as to have it well in hand, he himself proposed to increase his work by giving additional concerts in other cities, in order to keep the musicians employed during a longer period of the year, and so secure for them more practice and more pay. In these cities he has steadily won fame for himself and for them, until now he is gladly welcomed East and West; and in New York and in Philadelphia his departure is deplored, as it is here. You have heard and will bear witness to the great results which he has achieved, and with which he has delighted his audiences, and you will not soon forget how the Orchestra under his hand has learned to soar and to sing — surely the highest praise.

Mr. Gericke's successor was Mr. Arthur Nikisch of Leipzig. He had been under consideration five years before, and the new negotiations with him were entrusted to Mr. Otto Dresel, a Boston musician of high standing. In a long letter of instructions to Mr. Dresel, October 8, 1888,<sup>1</sup> Mr. Higginson sets forth his views in an interesting fashion.

. . . Mr. Gericke does not look very well and is suffering from his nerves and from too much work in the past years. He exhausts himself very much with his work, and perhaps

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Howe prints a portion of this letter.

this is unavoidable for a thorough and conscientious artist. The men of the orchestra are naturally very trying, as you are aware, and musicians are made upon their own plan. About all this you know better than I do. Further than that, our climate is very trying to us, to foreigners, and more especially, as it would seem, to artists.

About Mr. Nikisch — I never had a doubt. In the first place, your opinion in such matters is very valuable. You were very clear and emphatic as to his artistic value. In the second place, I got a very full and very favorable account of him from friends in Vienna, on whose judgment I entirely rely. . . . I have no question that he can do the work — no doubt, if he is strong enough. . . . I am bound to say about Mr. Gericke that he has done all that he could do, and has worked very hard and very conscientiously at all times to carry out the ends in view. He never spares himself one moment. I never have exercised any supervision; I never have urged him, and I am not in a position to do so. You know very well that I am a busy man, and have many cares on my mind; that I must keep this orchestral matter before me, but I cannot give it much daily care or thought. I cannot go and see that the conductor is busy with his work day after day, week after week. Very often I do not go to a rehearsal for months at a time. That care I will not have on my mind, nor will I have any care or worry with regard to making the programmes or arrangements; nor will I undertake to engage any musicians. I have a manager who is an excellent fellow and has had some experience, and who, here and in other cities, makes all arrangements. He also makes the contracts, by reëngaging men when they expire, engages new men and discharges old men; but he does this at the bidding of the conductor of the orchestra. He has neither the experience nor the knowledge to enable him to look up new men, therefore to the conductor is left the whole artistic direction of the work and management. He must lay out his plans, of course make his programmes,

find new men if he loses the old ones, either by their going or by his dismissal of them for ill conduct or for want of ability. He must think beforehand and arrange as to the concerts in town and out of town; he must preserve discipline in the orchestra, which is a more difficult matter than on the other side. He is free and unfettered in all these matters, has no government officer, inspector or director to bother him. He is as free as a man can well be in this world — any man who has much work and considerable responsibilities on his shoulders. . . .

My contracts are very strong, indeed much stronger than European contracts usually are.<sup>1</sup> They have only been used for the good of the men as a body. If a man is so rude and so insubordinate that it cannot be borne at the rehearsals, and does not show any signs of improvement, he must be discharged, and can be under this contract. In short, I have the power, but have never used it, and shall not use it unless absolutely necessary. Of course, a man who makes a disturbance in a public meeting — being at a concert or any other meeting — in this country can be locked up, but nobody wants to lock up an offending violin or clarinet player. On these scores he need have no uneasiness. But I want to know whether I can rely on his conscientiousness and fidelity to his duties without a word from me; on his power to rule the men and keep the peace, and get such work as he needs out of them; and whether I can rely on his physical health and strength. Mr. Gericke was a pretty strong man and he has exhausted himself. He said on coming here that he had injured his health before by much hard work. He does not work as Thomas does, but I fancy few men can do so. It will not help Mr. Nikisch to come over here and fail from want of physical vigor. . . .

To sum up — the engagement would be for eight months of

<sup>1</sup> Section twelve of the Orchestra contract reads: "If said musician fails to play to the satisfaction of said Higginson, said Higginson may dismiss said musician from the Orchestra, paying his salary to the time of dismissal, and shall not be liable to pay him any compensation or damages for such dismissal."

the year, or less; the salary would be \$8000; the conductor has the sole artistic management of the concerts given; he is to rule the men; rehearse as often as he finds necessary; rehearse the choruses, if he wishes them for any concerts; to make the programmes; to engage the soloists; to look up and engage fresh musicians when needed, which will now rarely happen, if at all; to discharge men if he sees fit. Of course, this will be done with my assistance, if I can help him. He has sole power in all these matters. . . . You know the aims, objects and pecuniary results of all my musical experience here, and you know what the result has been. It is far enough from what I want to attain, but, at the same time, it has been something. It is a work with which I wish to go on as long as I can, and if it can be made to continue forever, which is my expectation, so much the better. I do not believe that there is any such engagement for a director of an orchestra in the world. . . . I want him to fully understand that, if he comes here, I must rely on him entirely, and I do not want to rely in vain, either on his will to do all that an artist may do to carry out my purposes, or on his strength to accomplish all this. Pray let him understand that I have never interfered with Mr. Gericke in his programmes or any of his arrangements, and shall not interfere with him. Whatever I may know of music, I do not know enough to meddle with that part. If he understands all these conditions and thinks he can carry these all out, *I should like to know it by cable.* . . .

Mr. Dresel's reply to Major Higginson's anxiety about Mr. Nikisch's health is amusing enough:—

" . . . He is not strongly built, but must have a pretty tough and wiry constitution, or else he would not be alive. In reply to my expressed anxiety about his physical strength, he said that more than once he had had to conduct four Wagner Operas in one week. Considering that it nearly kills *me* to *hear one* of the beastly things, I think conducting four of them

in one week, may be sufficient to prove *his* powers of endurance!!"

The delightful Mr. Nikisch arrived in due time, in spite of the objections of the Musicians' Protective Union on the ground that his "admission to the United States was a violation of the Contract Labor Law." This contention was not sustained, but it marked the beginning of the long struggle with the Union. Mr. Higginson never yielded ground. So far as the welfare of the Orchestra players was concerned, he saw "no use or need for the Union"; and in this position he was upheld by the great majority of lovers of music.<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Nikisch has been characterized as a poet rather than a disciplinarian, and his temperament inclined him to "freeverse" renderings of his musical moods. The public liked him, and sorrowed over his sudden departure for Budapest in 1893. His correspondence with Mr. Higginson is most agreeable, except in their ultimate divergence of view with regard to the obligations imposed by Mr. Nikisch's contract.

The negotiations for a new conductor were placed in the hands of Major Higginson's friend O. W. Donner, who proceeded to Vienna to consult with Epstein and Gericke. The position was offered to the latter, but his health then seemed to forbid a second term of service. Richter was invited, and actually signed a contract, without, however, succeeding in securing a release from his Vienna contract. His correspondence on this point does not leave a favorable impression upon the mind of a layman. Then it looked for a time as if Schuck of Dresden might accept the position. Mr. Donner's letters and cablegrams, through this trying period, are an illuminating comment upon the psychology of musicians. "You told me at the time that artists were a '*queer lot*,' but in Richter's case

<sup>1</sup> "In keeping the Boston Symphony Orchestra independent and wholly devoted to art he has bestowed upon his fellow countrymen a gift more precious than valor on the battlefield." — W. J. Henderson in the *New York Sun*.

this is much too mild an expression." — "It is almost impossible to get any reliable information from impartial people. Impartiality is hard to find among artists. I have yet to meet the artist that does not consider *himself* far superior to any of the others."

Anxious Major Higginson, sitting in State Street, had a list of twenty-two possible European conductors; and as Mr. Donner's letters and cablegrams poured in, he checked off the characteristics of each candidate: "fairish," "inexperienced and talented," "pretty good," "no," "no use," "can't," "poor," "rough but goodish," "Richter recommended," etc. Ultimately the choice fell upon Emil Paur, who had been Nikisch's successor in the Stadt Theater at Leipzig.

Mr. Paur, after his first rehearsal in Boston, thought the Orchestra "the best in the world." Critics praised his "sincerity" and "robustness" and his hospitality to new musical ideas. "The Orchestra," wrote Mr. H. T. Parker in 1911, "had been primitive under Mr. Henschel; it had become expert under Mr. Gericke; it had turned romantic under Mr. Nikisch and Mr. Paur."<sup>1</sup>

And now, in 1898, Mr. Gericke came back for eight more seasons. "Mr. Gericke, returning for a second term," says Mr. Parker, "restored the balance again. He abated not a whit his zeal for technical perfection, his exquisite sense of quality and euphony of tone. He was soon able to begin again with those proficiencies where he had ended, and to advance upon the refining and perfecting of them. He had only to make ready anew a familiar and sensitive instrument." Those were happy years for Mr. Higginson, in spite of his heavy responsibilities for the Orchestra and for many other undertakings. His relations with Mr. Gericke were cordial, and the Orchestra passed from triumph to triumph.

<sup>1</sup> "Thirty Years of the Boston Symphony Orchestra"; *Boston Transcript*, September 30, 1911.

A landmark in its history was the removal to the new Symphony Hall on Huntington Avenue, in 1900. The plans had been made seven years before, when the proposed opening of a new street threatened the destruction of the old building in Hamilton Place. A corporation had been formed to carry out the undertaking, and the generous subscription of over \$400,000 for shares indicated how completely the cause of music had won its way in Boston. But the cost of building had risen so rapidly by 1900 that more than three quarters of a million was necessary. The directors mortgaged the hall, and leased it to Mr. Higginson, who agreed to "meet costs of administration, taxes and all charges, and to pay to the stockholders the rest of the receipts." As a matter of fact, there has never been any profit for the stockholders, and Mr. Higginson quietly added the large annual deficit from the Symphony Hall to the regular and expected deficit upon the Orchestra. But the building was wonderfully well adapted to its purposes, as the Inaugural Concert proved; and Major Higginson's address at the ceremonies gave the public an opportunity to manifest their sense of gratitude and pride. Indeed, there had been few of the letters enclosing subscriptions for shares that had not expressed the warmest personal feeling toward the initiator and sustainer of the Orchestra.

The establishment of the Pension Fund in 1903 gave the players an additional sense of security for the future. The Musicians Union was sleepless in its hostility. "I do not wish to fight the union," wrote Major Higginson to Mr. Gericke, "but if the union wishes to fight our orchestra, it must fight me, and I am ready." He did not hesitate to write and speak plainly to Gericke about the burden he himself was carrying. In 1898: "The load is heavy and does not grow lighter, as I grow older and less able to work. You will not work for money when you are of my age [64], and you will never work so hard as I do now and must work for ten years more." In 1901: "It has cost me great anxiety and pain in the bad years when I

was losing much money and could not be sure of keeping the concerts." With characteristic energy, however, he urges Gericke in 1903 to go to Europe to secure new players: "Go to-morrow or the next day. Don't wait until next week; go this week. Get right at the matter; finish it as fast and as well as you can. . . . I have a great many things to do, but, if necessary, I could sail for Europe to-morrow." Sometimes he paid Gericke the compliment of writing him in German, after a particularly fine concert: —

**VEREHRTER HERR KAPELLMEISTER:—**

Musterhaft! Reizend! Edel! Vollkommen! und noch mehr wenn ich nur die Worte hätte!

Or this (February 25, 1906), after a noble rendering of the Freischütz overture: —

**VEREHRTER HERR KAPELLMEISTER:—**

"Freischütz" kenne ich vom Anfange bis zum Ende, und ich habe die Overtüre sehr lieb, aber nie wie gestern — nicht sogar in Wien — habe ich sie gehört. Jede Note, jede Phrase — alles. Das Blut ist mir in Kopf gestiegen und ich wollte nicht sprechen.

High-water mark!!!

Here is a letter written to comfort the distressed conductor after a small audience: —

*April 14, 1904.*

**MY DEAR MR. GERICKE:—**

I understand very well that you should have been much annoyed and mortified by the small house to hear the Ninth Symphony, but I want you also to understand the position of other people. Did you notice that we had hardly a friend in the hall? Your especial friends and admirers, as well as ours, were busy with other things and could not go.

My own life is an example of the lives of others. Yesterday morning I went to work at a quarter past eight o'clock; was very busy until two o'clock, when I went to Concord, twenty miles away, to the funeral of a dear friend. I arrived home at half-past six; could not even get the nap which I am ordered to take; got my dinner and went to the concert. I have a very strong liking for the Ninth Symphony, but last night I should have gone to bed at 8 o'clock if it had not been for you and the Orchestra.

This morning I went to work at half-past eight and shall be busy steadily until seven o'clock to-night, with one care or another. I have two business meetings after I leave the office to-day.

Plenty of other people work just as much as I do, are just as full of cares and are just as tired. I would give a week's earnings to go to bed this very hour, but I cannot do it. The men are very busy, and the women are full of engagements and duties and are very busy. . . .

Now, I know better than anybody else that you have deserved every bit that you have got, that you have earned all the reputation and the applause which have been given to you; but I also know that other people have worked just as hard as you and have failed to get these returns. They have been well paid neither in money nor in praise. Everybody must suffer from disappointment. I have been very busy with an especial and very important matter of business for some months, have traveled a great many miles to carry it out, have worked very hard; and I failed absolutely yesterday. It is a much greater disappointment and loss to me than you have had since you have been in this country, but there is no use in complaining about it. It made me very tired and very cross yesterday, and you no doubt noticed both these things and suffered from them. . . .

Dear Mr. Gericke, don't think that I am ignorant of your feelings as an artist and a man last night. I wish to present

to you the fact that we are all mortal, that we cannot always succeed. . . .

I think you have got more and had fewer disappointments as an artist than any man I know, and I am very glad of it.

With kind regards to Mrs. Gericke (to whom I was very cross) and to you (to whom I was crosser), I am,

Very truly yours,

H. L. HIGGINSON.

[Penned postscript.] Please read this note patiently. It is written in the kindest spirit to you. *Glück auf!*

It was not conductors alone who needed occasional comforting and admonition. There were jealousies among the players, and lapses of various sorts.<sup>1</sup> Some of these masters of heavenly music drank at times, and played a certain card game invented for cooler nerves than most artists possess. To a friend who suggested that a committee might relieve him of some of his personal responsibilities for the Orchestra, and that ladies might be asked to serve upon this committee, Mr. Higginson replied: "No woman would wish to reprove a man for drinking or gambling, or listen to foolish love-affairs — all of which comes to a showman." Forehanded artists asked him to invest their money for them, and the impecunious or ill knew that Major Higginson had a soft heart. Sometimes he groaned: "If the world consisted only of musicians, it would go to pieces at once."

But Mr. Higginson's personal relations with musicians brought him pleasures which far outweighed the annoyances. Many of the distinguished artists of the Orchestra became his warm friends. All of the conductors, from Henschel to Fiedler, delighted to arrange musical evenings for the Higginsons at 191 Commonwealth Avenue. Mr. Kneisel and Mr. Longy brought their quartettes for chamber music, and famous pianists and

<sup>1</sup> "Every now and then a man would be very insolent, which lasted about five minutes." — H. L. H.

soloists played and sang. Expressions of appreciation of Mr. Higginson's services to the musical public kept pouring in upon him; and in spite of his New England shyness in the presence of open praise, he was deeply gratified. In 1906, for instance, many of his friends united in subscribing for a portrait bust by St. Gaudens to be set up in Symphony Hall. The following letter from Mrs. George Tyson, the chairman of the committee, explains their purpose:—

*May 10, 1906.*

DEAR MR. HIGGINSON:—

We, the undersigned, are moved to express our deep appreciation of your generosity, courage and patience in the inception and continuance of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, which has for twenty-five years given joy and education to thousands. But above and beyond this has been the force of your example, which we believe has permanently raised the quality of citizenship in our Commonwealth. We therefore ask that you will consent to sit to the sculptor, St. Gaudens, for a portrait to be placed in some permanent position, that the example of your life may serve as an enduring inspiration to your fellow citizens.

To this Mr. Higginson replied:—

*May 11, 1906.*

Your letter has moved us both deeply, and we are very grateful for the high honor offered to me. The work of the Orchestra has been made light by the never-failing sympathy of friends and of a great, generous public, an immense encouragement to us. We all hold the creed that our national home is what we make it, and that by joint work we can make it beautiful and happy. The part which has fallen to me is no less a duty than a joy, indeed a necessity to myself. Will you say to your Committee that I thank each and all of them heart-

ily for their kindness in the past and present, and for this fresh, graceful expression of their sympathy and confidence in my work and life. It pleases us both that Mr. St. Gaudens is chosen to make the portrait.

The sculptor's ill-health prevented his execution of the task, and it was finally entrusted to the accomplished hands of Bela Pratt. His noble bronze, completed in 1911, perpetuates the friendship and gratitude felt by a whole community.

Mr. Higginson cherished, likewise, the hundreds of letters from music-lovers quite unknown to him, telling of their indebtedness to his generosity. One must here suffice.

MY DEAR MAJOR HIGGINSON:—

As I graduate from the Rehearsal rush-line to the proud and happy possession of a subscriber's ticket, I beg you to let me thank you for the great privilege the Rehearsal line is to many.

For seven years, in rough and pleasant weather, I, with 500 other beneficiaries, have rejoiced in the music so generously placed within our reach.

Dropping the quarter into the open palm I always felt a deep gratitude to Major Higginson, and bounded up the stairs, to forget everything in the re-creating power of that marvelous orchestra's universal language, which to lonely and homesick people is tonic and consolation.

The Symphony waiting line is unique. There you see people from all over this vast country, young and old, many music students, making the sacrifice of the whole day and studying while they wait. Often the blind come. One day I stood beside a young Italian violin teacher, who had brought three little girl pupils, eager, dark-eyed children, doubtless talented, and recruited from the crowded quarter of Boston. We fell to talking about instruments, of Mr. Ferir's viola, a Gasparo da Salo; and this man had come from that part of Italy and knew the history of that famous worker so long ago.

Then the excitement of not knowing whether you'll get in and the joy of a seat if you do; and the brilliancy of the music from the second balcony. Oh! it's Paradise! and I'm not sure but some of the best critics sit there too, to say nothing of their enthusiasm and appreciation, and the neighborliness of dividing your bread and butter and apple with the fellow next, if he hasn't any, and the profitable and pleasant chats it often leads to.

Early in 1906, there was a friendly difference of opinion between Mr. Higginson and Mr. Gericke with regard to the terms for renewing their contract, and the conductor decided to resign. Mr. Higginson's letter to him is impeccable:—

BOSTON, *February 18, 1906.*

DEAR MR. GERICKE:—

Your pleasant note of to-day has just come, and does not surprise me, as your wish for a quiet life and for a return to your own home is strong.

I am very sorry for your decision, and have yielded what seemed possible in order to get a different reply from you, for your decision ends a long and fine service to the Orchestra and to us all. But I accept your reply as wise, and in the kindly spirit, and I think with pleasure and gratitude of the concerts during this season as the finest in our experience.

They will leave a noble memory. May I thank you heartily for your brilliant and arduous work in making an orchestra, and for the ripe, beautiful results which the Orchestra has given us.

I am with great respect,

Very truly yours,

HENRY L. HIGGINSON.

Gericke, as well as I [wrote Mr. Higginson in 1911], had been much disappointed at the leaving of Kneisel with his quartette and at the loss of Martin Loeffler, who was a ripe

musician of great skill with his violin and of much power as a composer. The loss of all these men at one time was severe, but we filled their places with men from Europe and elsewhere, and put at first Arbos as concert-master, and then, after a year, put Willy Hess in that position. Hess was an admirable concert-master and soloist, and made also a pretty good quartette. Arbos was a charming man and artist, but he did not like the position of concert-master.

When it was decided that Mr. Gericke should go, Mr. Ellis went to Europe to see whom he could engage, talked with various musicians, and eventually made a bargain with Dr. Karl Muck, who at that time was at the Opera in Berlin. It seemed doubtful for many weeks whether he could come; but at last the Emperor of Germany, who had a particular liking for Dr. Muck, agreed that he should come to us for a year. . . .

Dr. Muck was in a way like Mr. Gericke, — a man of distinguished taste and skill and inspiration, — a very noble conductor. During the year, as we much wanted to keep him for a second year, the request was preferred to the Emperor, and he granted us the privilege.

The engagement of Dr. Muck was considered a most brilliant stroke of fortune. Born in Darmstadt in 1859, and educated at the universities of Leipzig and Heidelberg, he had risen to the very head of his profession as conductor of the Royal Opera House in Berlin. Mr. Higginson had long had him under consideration, and in various visits to Europe had watched his conducting with care. The German Emperor's consent to Dr. Muck's American engagement was obtained with difficulty.<sup>1</sup> From his first concert in Boston Dr. Muck's artistic distinction was fully recognized. Mr. Higginson wrote thus to his wife (October 16, 1906) of the success of the opening

<sup>1</sup> "In an interview soon after his arrival in America, Dr. Muck attributed this consent entirely to the Emperor's regard for Americans, especially for Harvard University, with which Mr. Higginson was known to be closely associated." — Howe, *op. cit.*, p. 210.

concert: "Muck's security in his orchestra was shown by his cessation of beating time for some minutes, tho' the Orchestra felt him all the time. The men and he are mutually content — and happy over it. It was a very fine, delicate, artistic concert."

As Mr. Parker wrote in 1911:<sup>1</sup>—

"A perfected instrument awaited him; he appreciated, respected, preserved its perfections. He could hardly refine upon the technique in which Mr. Gericke had schooled the band or upon the tonal quality, to which his ear was almost as sensitive as had been Mr. Gericke's own. He could, however, begin where Mr. Gericke ended, in the broadening of the eloquence and in the heightening of the accent of his orchestral voices. The technique and tonal perfections were, so to say, fixed qualities, and in them and through them Dr. Muck sought and attained a diversity of characterizing eloquence. In him was and is the discriminating, the responsive, and to disclose the individuality of each composer, of each composition that he played. He made his orchestra as discerning and as characterizing, as responsively eloquent. . . ."

High diplomacy was utilized in order to persuade the Emperor to extend Dr. Muck's leave of absence for a second year. Major Higginson sent a personal letter, which Senator Lodge declared "wholly admirable. I would not change a word." The Secretary of State, Elihu Root, asked our Ambassador in Berlin, Charlemagne Tower, to use his influence.

"I have pleasure in informing you," wrote Mr. Tower on March 7, 1907, to Senator Lodge, "that I have had a conversation with the Emperor in which he announced to me that he has decided to grant to Dr. Muck a leave of absence for one year more, in order that he may remain during that time in Boston. The Emperor said that he cannot well dispense with the services of Dr. Muck as director of his own orchestra here, though he recognizes the great service which Colonel Higgin-

<sup>1</sup> *Boston Transcript*, Sept. 30, 1911.

son has rendered in maintaining the standard of good music in America, and he is willing to assist him in his efforts in that direction by complying with his request that Dr. Muck may remain one more year. The Emperor added, however, that he cannot extend Dr. Muck's leave of absence beyond that period, but that, if he should decide to remain for a longer time absent from Germany, he would have to resign his position as director here."

Upon Dr. Muck's return to Berlin in 1908, Mr. Max Fiedler of Hamburg succeeded to the conductorship of the Orchestra. He proved a great favorite with the general public, both in his programme-making, and in his personal vigor and enthusiasm. After "the four happiest years of his life," he handed back the baton to Dr. Muck, who began his second term of service in 1912, and continued it until 1918.

Every reader of these pages is aware of the bitterness and the tragedy associated with the name of Dr. Muck during our war with Germany. That must be touched upon in a later chapter, but it should not be allowed now to obliterate the happier memory of his achievement through many unclouded seasons. Even after the World War had for nearly two years wakened every latent racial and nationalistic animosity, Philip Hale, the distinguished critic, could thus describe Dr. Muck and the Orchestra:—

"These concerts in Boston are so remarkable, they have been so remarkable under the leadership of Dr. Muck, that they are now taken by too many as a matter of course. For the Boston Symphony Orchestra is not merely one that contains certain accomplished virtuosos; the orchestra is a virtuoso. It is an instrument which, having been brought to a state of perfect mechanism by Dr. Muck, responds to his imaginative and poetic wishes. He stands there calm, undemonstrative, graceful, elegant, aristocratic; a man of singularly commanding and magnetic personality even in repose. The orchestra is his speech, the expression of the composer's music as it appeals to

the conductor's brain, heart and soul. It is now hardly possible to think of this Orchestra without the vision of Dr. Muck at its head as the interpreter of beauty and brilliance. Fortunate, thrice fortunate, is he in having at his command this Orchestra, largely his own creation; wholly the superb interpreter of composers as he understands them, as he shares in their own emotions, confessions, declarations, griefs and longings."<sup>1</sup>

In the autumn of 1918, after the storm still to be described was over, and Major Higginson had ceased his connection with the Orchestra, several thousand persons signed a testimonial written by President Eliot for presentation to Major Higginson upon his eighty-fourth birthday. The two men were born in the same year, 1834, and they had been comrades in many a great cause. No close for the Orchestra chapter of Major Higginson's life could be more serenely perfect than this letter:<sup>2</sup>—

CAMBRIDGE, 31 Oct., 1918.

DEAR MAJOR HIGGINSON:—

Some of the thousands of persons who have had their lives made more interesting and happier by the concerts of your Symphony Orchestra in Boston and its vicinity during the past thirty-seven years wish to declare to you on your eighty-fourth birthday their personal gratitude and their strong sense of the public benefits which have resulted and will result from your disinterested and patient labors on behalf of the Orchestra and the community it has served. Many of the signers of this Memorial are acquaintances who have long cherished high respect for you and your generous works, or friends, old and young, who feel for you the sincerest affection; but most of them are strangers, who gladly embrace this their first opportunity to tell you directly that you have gladdened and exalted their physical and spiritual lives.

Boston was historically the right place in the United States

<sup>1</sup> *Boston Herald*, May 7, 1916.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Higginson's reply to the letter is printed in chapter XIV.

to develop an orchestra of high merit. The soil in which you planted the Boston Symphony Orchestra in 1880-81 had been well prepared during the forty years preceding by a series of earlier organizations for providing orchestral concerts in the community where you and I grew up. These pioneering organizations were the Boston Academy of Music, the Musical Fund Society, the Germania Orchestra, the Philharmonic Society, and the Harvard Musical Association. Their resources were limited, and their achievements modest; but they made ready a supporting public for you. Your purpose was to create an Orchestra out of the best available material in all the world competent to render to perfection the best music in the world. In this very difficult undertaking your success has been marvelous. Your plans and policies have been wise and generous toward both your public and the artists whom you employed. Your Orchestra has given year by year a demonstration of the exceeding value of coöperative discipline. You have steadily insisted that the skilled musician's occupation is not a mechanical trade but an artistic profession. You have given your public the pure, refining, exalting, inspiring music of all nations and all periods. You have enlarged and strengthened the appreciation of sweet and noble music in this community.

We shall all better appreciate the work you have done for Boston and the country, if we bear in mind that good music sustains and consoles the human spirit in times of adversity, and is, next to good literature, the best expression of public prosperity, social joy, and religious transport. It transcends the limits of language or race, requires no versions or translations, and ranges freely through all the civilized world and the successive generations of men. Your success in creating the Symphony Orchestra as a permanent institution will have a high educational value in the future; for common enjoyment of immortal music allied with immortal poetry will prove an exalting and binding influence among the various elements of the American population.

On behalf of the signers of this Memorial, I greet you and Mrs. Higginson with heartiest congratulations on the principal work of your useful life, warmest thanks, and best wishes for your enjoyment of serene content as you look backward, and still more as you look forward.

Your old friend

CHARLES W. ELIOT.

To receive such a letter as that — and to deserve it — may surely be counted among the durable satisfactions of life.

## CHAPTER XI

### THE FRIEND OF THE COLLEGE

HENRICUM LEE HIGGINSON, virum egregium, cuius munificentia cum civibus suis summam voluptatem attulit, tum hanc universitatem auxit saepius et ornavit, *Artium Magistrum*. — PRESIDENT ELIOT, on presenting H. L. H. for the honorary degree of A.M. in 1882.

That you have found the College work the pleasantest of your life is a delight to me, and a good omen for the future of the University. . . . The things at Cambridge to which you have given largely are fundamental — playgrounds and the Union, both pleasure-giving, wholesome, and democratic. I suppose you know that for years you have been to Harvard students the type of the public-spirited, independent, generous American citizen, who "looks forward and not backward and lends a hand." I hope you and Mrs. Higginson thoroughly enjoy this reputation of yours. It corresponds accurately to the facts of your life. — PRESIDENT ELIOT to H. L. H., May 22, 1909.

He was the friend of all men — his immediate circle, his city, his state, his college, his country, all of which he saw in terms of mankind. His relation with every one of these units was a personal relation, the relation of a friend. It was primarily as a friend that he bestowed upon Harvard the great benefactions which his ability, industry, and self-sacrifice empowered him to make.  
— *Harvard Alumni Bulletin*, November 20, 1919.

IN the decade of 1880–1890, as we have seen, the chief event in Henry Higginson's public life was the founding of the Symphony Orchestra. In the following decade, 1890–1900, he became known as a munificent benefactor of Harvard, a member of its Corporation, and a man deeply concerned with the relations of the American college to the American Commonwealth. This aspect of his life will be surveyed in the present chapter. The succeeding chapters will deal with some of his friendships, tastes, opinions, and the various activities which gave him his unique position as a "useful citizen," particularly from 1900 to the celebration of his 80th birthday in 1914. The final chapter will discuss what is in some respects the most dramatic and picturesque phase of his whole career — the epoch of the World War.

As we now pass from the decade that witnessed the birth of the Orchestra to the decade peculiarly identified with Major Higginson's work for Harvard, we must pause to note the death of George Higginson, on April 27, 1889.<sup>1</sup> "Your father," wrote William James, "was one of the very earliest elder figures whom I can remember in Boston; and the impression he always gave me, of ruggedness and masculinity with modesty and kindness, was altogether unique." Charles Francis Adams wrote: "He was honest, straightforward, single-minded. He had a hard fight of it through much of his life, but he won his battle and made a success of it. Finally he retired, carrying with him the respect and kindly regard of everyone. I don't well see what any man can ask for more." — "A high-minded, simple, courageous man," wrote Henry Cabot Lodge, "honest with an aggressive honesty none too common, generous and patriotic. It is a deep satisfaction to feel that I have known him, and that I had the honor to be his kinsman and friend." A letter of condolence from Dr. Vincent Y. Bowditch made a reference to George Higginson's Puritanism. "When I hear sneers at the Puritanism of Boston, your dear old father's face is one of a few that come up to me to put such sneers to shame and make one wish that *such* 'Puritanism' could be spread far and wide."

Henry Higginson's reply was most characteristic: —

BOSTON, April 30, '89.

MY DEAR BOY: —

You are very kind to think of us in trouble, tho' you can't help it by nature, and very kind to say pleasant words of father. The loss and the pain is evident, and perhaps this other feeling too. As I sat with him in the last days and nights, the thought came to me again and again, that a return to health would be very short-lived, and of doubtful vigor, —

<sup>1</sup> The memory of the gallant, old-school gentleman is now perpetuated by the George Higginson Professorship of Physiology at Harvard, endowed by his children.

and then another illness and suffering perhaps, — and I half hoped that he would die *then* quietly — without pain and after a very happy winter. He was a man without great talents, but of a great gift for goodness, which he cultivated vigorously, — and when your father comes to die, you and others will prize the same qualities in him even more highly than his fame. . . . Puritanism! The older I grow, the more I incline to their ideal — and the luxury and the wastefulness and a thousand things send me that way — in thought — tho' hardly in deeds or living perhaps. Let no one sneer at ideals or enthusiasms.

Henry Higginson's loyalty to Harvard ran back to his boyhood. It was affected in no way by the fact that his own college course had ended before Christmas of his Freshman year. In some of his earliest letters from Europe he had reprehended the example of a rich Bostonian who had died without leaving anything to "the college." Out of his own slender income, in 1860, he had purchased books in Vienna for the Harvard Library. In September, 1868, the year before Charles W. Eliot became President, Major Higginson had written to his wife: "Your mother discoursed about the poverty of the University and said that not improbably the salaries of the Professors would not be paid in full this year. Oh! if some dozen men would only put it up high and dry above want! One million dollars to start with and three million more afterward."

He had married the daughter of one of the most famous of Harvard professors. Mrs. Louis Agassiz's name led the list of Cambridge ladies who, in 1879, organized that "Private Collegiate Instruction for Women" which marked the first definite step toward the founding of Radcliffe College. This undertaking may fairly be considered an outgrowth of the Agassiz School on Quincy Street. "But for the school," wrote Mrs. Agassiz late in life, "the college (so far as I am concerned)

would never have existed." When "The Society for the Collegiate Instruction of Women" was formed in May, 1882, Major Higginson's name appears as one of the signers of the Articles of Association. When Radcliffe College was finally incorporated in 1894, he became an "Associate," or member of the governing board. He served in this capacity until 1906, and from 1894 until 1905 he acted also as Treasurer. As a matter of fact, then, Major Higginson's "affectionate and incalculable service"<sup>1</sup> to Radcliffe — a service induced by his loyalty to Mrs. Agassiz as well as by his interest in the higher education for women — began much earlier than his official relations with Harvard.

His first — and only — degree from Harvard was conferred in 1882, after the first season of the Boston Symphony Orchestra.

"It is a strange thing," says President Eliot, "that Major Higginson was never given any degree from Harvard University till he was nearly fifty years of age. That was a degree of Master of Arts, an honorary degree. Stranger still, considering that he was one of the most beloved men in the whole generation of Harvard graduates and benefactors between 1861 and 1893, he was never elected to the Board of Overseers. I cannot recall now any reason for this curious omission; but it is a fact that he was never even presented to the electors as a candidate for their votes. I find it impossible to explain this anomaly."<sup>2</sup>

But Henry Higginson was never a man to stand upon ceremony, or to wait for official sanctions, when he saw an opportunity for rendering service. Long before he became a member of the Harvard Corporation, he had begun to solicit funds for the College. Here is an admirable begging letter, addressed to a kinsman, in March, 1886:—

<sup>1</sup> *Elizabeth Cary Agassiz: a Biography*, by Lucy Allen Paton (Boston, 1919), p. 208.

<sup>2</sup> Address at the Memorial meeting in the Harvard Union, Nov. 17, 1919.

DEAR X:—

Nobody knows his duties better than yourself — therefore I presume to admonish you. I want you, as the oldest and richest member of your family and mine, to give to the College \$100,000, to be used in any way which seems best to you.

My reasons are that you, a public-spirited and educated gentleman, owe it to yourself, to your country, and to the Republic. How else are we to save our country if not by education in all ways and on all sides? What can we do so useful to the human race in every aspect? It is wasting your time to read such platitudes.

Democracy has got fast hold of the world, and *will* rule. Let us see that she does it more wisely and more humanly than the kings and nobles have done! Our chance is *now* — before the country is full and the struggle for bread becomes intense and bitter.

Educate, and save ourselves and our families and our money from mobs!

I would have the gentlemen of this country lead the new men, who are trying to become gentlemen, in their gifts and in their efforts to promote education.

We have a neighbor who gives very freely, and whom you rightly do not respect. Stand before him in all ways. I shall be sorry to see his name down for \$100,000 before yours. It gives a certain power to give this money, and will give you great pleasure. Think how easily it has come. Give one fourth of your last year, and count it money potted down for quiet good.

One gentleman has just given \$115,000, who cannot spare it so well as you, and whom people do not accredit with such generosity. B—— is not so rich a man as is supposed, and cannot afford to do more than you. If I were to name two men who have helped nobly, you would stare.

Kindly send your name to Edward Hooper to-morrow A.M.

for the \$100,000. I *know* that you will enjoy it much more than you will by keeping it. Never mind any reasons now. You and yours are too far on to mind them. . . .

Gratify me, and gratify yourself and your wife and children. Not a thought, not a doubt. Do it!

The earliest of Major Higginson's notable benefactions to Harvard was the gift, in 1890, of Soldiers Field, the great playground south of the Charles River, where the Stadium now stands. On May 14, 1890, he had written to his wife from New York: "The purchase of land is made, and is certainly a boon to the College. I hope that you approve, and know that some day you'll be glad of it. All your family have done something for the College, and I ought to, and the memorial is worth while, too." In passing the deeds to the President and Fellows on June 5, Major Higginson wrote: —

The gift is absolutely without condition of any kind. The only other wish on my part is, that the ground shall be called The Soldier's Field<sup>1</sup> — and marked with a stone bearing the names of some dear friends, alumni of the University, and noble gentlemen, who gave freely and eagerly all that they had or hoped for, to their country and to their fellow men in the hour of great need — the war of 1861 to 1865, in defence of the Republic.

JAMES SAVAGE, JR.  
CHARLES RUSSELL LOWELL  
EDWARD BARRY DALTON  
STEPHEN GEORGE PERKINS  
JAMES JACKSON LOWELL  
ROBERT GOULD SHAW

<sup>1</sup> This is the form of words used in the official pamphlet published by the University in 1890, containing Major Higginson's address. In republishing the address in 1902, he used the form, "The Soldiers' Field." The common usage at Cambridge, however, is "Soldiers Field." See the *Harvard Alumni Bulletin* for Jan. 1, 1920.

This is only a wish and not a condition — and, moreover, it is a happiness to me to serve in any way the College which has done so much for us all.

He had already consulted his friend James Russell Lowell, then an old man ending his days at Elmwood, about an appropriate inscription. Lowell's letter follows:—

ELMWOOD, CAMBRIDGE, MASS.  
24th May, 1890.

MY DEAR HENRY:—

You were a good boy, are a good man, and are always doing good things. But you lay a hard thing upon me, for there is no writing so full of pitfalls as an inscription.

I know your modesty will hesitate, but I think this is a case where the memorial will lose in meaning if your name be not associated with it. Should the inscription be in Latin or English? I think it should be in English. How would something like this do? or something like it?

"TO THE HAPPY MEMORY  
of

FRIENDS, COMRADES, KINSMEN, who died for  
their country, this field is dedicated by

H. H.

"Though love repine and reason chafe,  
There comes a voice without reply,  
'T is man's perdition to be safe  
When for the truth he ought to die."

It would n't be well to mingle Latin with English, and these verses of Emerson are nobly fitting for the purpose.

Throw this into your waste-paper-basket if you don't like it.

I quote E. from memory and the verses should be compared with the text.<sup>1</sup> With love to your wife,

Affectionately yours,

J. R. LOWELL.

Major Higginson's address to the Harvard students, explaining the purpose of his gift, was on the evening of June 10. "It may interest you to know," he wrote to Colonel Henry Lee, "that I am asked by Dr. Walcott and others to say a few words to the students about this playground, and that I am to do so next Tuesday evening at 7½ o'clock, Sever Hall or Building. It is not much that I am to say, but I'll try to interest them."

Equally modest were the arrangements made by Harvard for his reception. Professor John Williams White, the Chairman of the Athletic Committee, wrote on June 9: "I called a hundred of the fellows together, and told them briefly that you had given us the field and that you would come out tomorrow evening and talk to us about it. I thought it better

<sup>1</sup> Lowell's memory was only slightly at fault. The inscription as it now stands upon the stone in front of the Locker Building north of the Stadium is as follows:—

To the  
Happy Memory  
of  
JAMES SAVAGE, JR.,  
CHARLES RUSSELL LOWELL,  
EDWARD BARRY DALTON,  
STEPHEN GEORGE PERKINS,  
JAMES JACKSON LOWELL,  
ROBERT GOULD SHAW,  
Friends, Comrades, Kinsmen,  
Who Died for Their Country,  
This Field is Dedicated by  
Henry Lee Higginson.

"Though love repine and reason chafe,  
There came a voice without reply,—  
'T is man's perdition to be safe,  
When for the truth he ought to die."



THE ARMY FRIENDS COMMEMORATED BY SOLDIERS FIELD

Stephen G. Perkins

Robert Gould Shaw

Charles Russell Lowell

James J. Lowell

Edward B. Dalton

James Savage



to tell some of the fellows just the day before your talk, and have them tell the others, than to put up posters announcing the meeting." Professor White also asked about a hundred men, students and faculty, to meet Major Higginson at his house after the conclusion of the brief exercises.

I cannot discover that Major Higginson had ever made a speech in his life, except in that negro church at Cottonham, Georgia, and in the friendly intimacy of the Tavern Club. He did not understand that ladies could be admitted to Sever Hall, and did not ask Mrs. Higginson to accompany him, though he did take his fourteen-year-old son. About four hundred men crowded into "Sever 11." President Eliot spoke briefly, in acceptance of the gift, and then came the address thus characterized by J. T. Morse: "As an utterance of deep feeling, made more intense by restrained expression, it is not surpassed in English literature. In form and substance it is beyond criticism. Hereafter the Major spoke on other occasions . . . and always with eloquence, beauty and feeling; but he never again quite reached the level of this address."<sup>1</sup>

The men who listened to it were greatly moved.

"After your husband's words to-night," wrote Charles Eliot Norton to Mrs. Higginson, "I was not in the mood to go to Mr. White's, so I thanked Henry for what he had said, and came home to tell you of the great service he has rendered in speaking as he did. You know what he said; it was said with such directness, simplicity, sincerity, and with such manly emotion as to be deeply impressive. It touched the heart."

Another auditor — no less fastidious than Norton — was William James.

95 IRVING ST., June 11.

MY DEAR HENRY: —

I could n't shake hands wi' you last night at Sever Hall, and was not asked to meet you at White's. But you can guess how I felt. To their dying day those men will remember your noble and simple appearance before them and the words you spoke.

<sup>1</sup> The Soldiers Field Address is printed as an appendix to this volume.

The best thing about this university is the chance these fellows get of meeting one man after another in Sever Hall who stands for something in the world outside, and who gives them a glimpse of an example and makes one of those personal impressions that abide. I'm sure you hit the mark last night. And I'm sure the field will do all the good, and more than all the good, you can possibly hope from it.

Yours ever,  
WM. JAMES.

No answer called for!

An answer came, however, and James wrote a second note:—

TAMWORTH IRON WORKS, N.H., June 20.

MY DEAR HENRY:—

I never expected a reply; but since you have written, I will, at the risk of appearing an ass, write an additional word myself. Which is that in the *after-taste* your speech looms more and more gigantic, or, seriously speaking, that it seems a more unique and impressive thing than ever. It entered into no cut-and-dried literary category, but was the expression of your own personal character and nothing else; and its simplicity and originality will make it stick in those boys as long as they live. I hear everyone else speak of it in the same way, as most impressive. Now don't reply to *this*!

Yours ever  
W. J.

Colonel Henry Lee wrote exultingly to Mrs. Higginson:—

"The Bible says that a man shall leave father and mother and cling to his wife, and *vice-versa*, the wife to the husband. And yet you were absent on the great occasion of Henry's life; for let him live to the age of Methuselah, he will never combine the making and the presenting a gift so happily. The nature of the gift, its most felicitous name suggested by you, its touching simplicity, and in consequence, beauty — it was

all perfect, and you of all beings should have been there to weep and to exult.

"I sent you all the papers giving any account of the presentation, that you might select the best and bind them up with Henry's letter and speech and President Eliot's introduction."

Lowell, too infirm to attend the meeting in Sever Hall, wrote from Elmwood: —

11 June, 1890.

DEAR HENRY: —

Your speech gave me a pleasure which I should call unqualified, but for the *amari aliquid* which memory flavored it with. It was simple, strong, tender — manly in short, and just what it should be. How pleased Ida must have been!

Yours always

J. R. LOWELL.

Mr. Higginson, in his modesty, was at first reluctant to allow the College to reprint the address. He writes to his wife on June 20: "John Gray says we should undoubtedly let that sermon be printed. I told him that we both objected, but he thinks us wrong." Colonel Lee bade them "not hesitate a moment to print"; and the address was soon in the hands of many persons. Touching acknowledgments came from the nearest relatives of the six comrades who were specially commemorated: from Charles Lowell's widow, James Savage's sister, and from the mother and sister of Robert Gould Shaw. The mother of William Lowell Putnam alludes to those happy days in Italy in 1857: —

It is a great pleasure to have a letter from you, and to receive from yourself the Address, which, at the time it appeared, I read with a deep and sacred sense of happiness and admiration.

Since then, I have read it again from time to time, and always with the same appreciation, and the same absorbed interest.

The portraits you have drawn, so lifelike, and so finely dis-

tinguished from one another, are representative of the youth of our country in that hour — of different types, yet alike in certain essential traits. You have given to our national history a page which will live, and teach, and inspire.

Your words, combined with your memorial gift, have prolonged the lives which might have seemed prematurely ended, and have extended their action far beyond its natural term. You have thus fulfilled the highest offices of friendship.

To the deep and devout satisfaction which the knowledge that this work has been done gives me, is added that of its having been done by you.

Those distant days in Italy, are often present to me, with other days that can never become distant to you or to me. . . .

MARY LOWELL PUTNAM.

Particularly gratifying were the notes from old comrades like C. F. Morse, Greely and Pelham Curtis, Charles L. Peirson, Arnold Rand, Charles Devens, and Lincoln R. Stone. "It is well," said the latter, "to recall the heroic ideal in these days when service seems to mean, not self-denial, doing only our duty to our country, — but money, 'pension' rather, 'pension, pension'!! Ex-President Hayes struck the same key: "We are drifting away from the golden days. We must not drift away from their nobleness." Other men wrote of "the low and sordid current of the times." "Your words struck a note that I am sorry to say seems rare in our days now." Edward W. Hooper, the Treasurer of Harvard, wrote from London: —

"Professor Sophocles used to say to us, 'There is a pleasure in tears.' I have just had such a pleasure while reading the report of your talk to the boys at Cambridge, and I owe you thanks for it — as well as for many other good things. Your gift of land is a great boon to the College, but the words and feelings that went with it are worth more than the land. Life at Cambridge is so comfortable and pleasant that a moral tonic

is really needed from time to time to keep it in health and strength."

Dr. Weir Mitchell, too, read the speech while traveling, and wrote: "I am not ashamed to say that over it I choked like an hysterical girl, and for a little was glad no one was by." "I want to send it to Theodore Roosevelt," wrote Henry Cabot Lodge. "It is the best, noblest, and most simply eloquent utterance that this corner of the world has heard for some time." John C. Bancroft wrote in Lincolnian monosyllables: "I can't say any less than that it is a good thing well done and a good speech well said: and I won't say any more lest I say too much."

But of all the scores of letters elicited by the Soldiers Field Address, it may be doubted if any gave more pleasure to its author than those words from a young Harvard athlete, who had perceived the ethical purpose of the Major's exhortation to undergraduates: "It matters but little the week after, whether a boat race or a football match be won or lost; but let a man or a team do but a single thing which is not entirely manly and aboveboard, and it sets them back in the *real* race, perhaps for years."

In that June of 1890, then, began the personal expressions of pride and affection which Major Higginson received from Harvard for nearly thirty years thereafter. There is something touching in the simplicity with which he records his pleasure, in this letter to his wife, on June 22:—

I went out late to Class Day and walked into the tree-grounds with the graduates, and sat on the grass with them all, that the folks on benches might see over our heads. Then in came the Seniors, sang, and then cheered quickly. . . . They cheered Dr. Peabody, Mr. Eliot, George Weld, who gave them the boathouse, and then they cheered me, all coming to their feet and giving me my title, when the Juniors took up the cheers. I got up, too, and stood still and sat down, wishing

that you and Alex were there, a little homesick, as I felt at Sever Hall. It is wonderful to me how sympathetic and kind, men and women, old and young, have been to me, and I am very grateful indeed to them, very glad for you, for you've not had very much to be proud of in your husband, very glad for all those old chaps who used to laugh at me and care for me, very glad indeed that people appreciate these fellows and their quality. Man after man, woman after woman, said the kindest words to me, until I almost cried.

A week later he made his first speech at a Commencement dinner, had ill luck with it, he thought, and made the first of a hundred resolutions never to speak again! "I forgot my piece at Commencement, and so Alex [Agassiz] had to prompt me. It was very late and everyone was tired, and so it went badly and now I shall have no more to say. Lots of people at Cambridge were very civil again to me."

The best evidence of the place Henry Higginson had now won in the regard of the Harvard authorities was his election in December, 1893, as a member of the Corporation. This honor came to him at the close of a distracted year. The failures due to the panic of 1893, while more acutely felt in the West and South than in New York and Boston, had had a disastrous effect upon the stock market. The extra session of Congress, called by President Cleveland in August, finally repealed the Silver-Purchase clause of the "Sherman Act" of 1890, thus maintaining the gold standard. But the free-silver agitation had swept the West; and Wall Street and State Street had had an anxious and at times a despairing summer.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "People have been having a real hell of a time of it financially. The silver party in the Senate has been acting with a pertinacity worthy of a better cause. Nothing but the certainty of Cleveland's veto has brought things to a square vote there for repeal. Henry Higginson looks as if he had grown five years older. I got an idea the first time I saw him of what the strain must have been." — Henry James to William James, Oct. 29, 1893.

A long letter written by Henry Higginson to his uncle Henry Lee on August 17 gives details of the market situation, of the railroads, and particularly of the affairs of the General Electric Company, of which Higginson had become a director. The closing pages are very personal:—

. . . One thing pray remember — about me. I've inherited from both parents the belief that one cannot escape with honor from the duties of a citizen — and I've seen the example of you and father. Do you suppose that as a child I did n't heed the words of my mother about slavery or your own course as a young man? It made a deep mark on me. And so I have felt and now feel the positive obligation to do as you have done, to struggle against ignorance and selfishness and sin — and in these times I am pushing in all ways at Washington to get action on this accursed law. Indeed, it has seemed to me so vital that I have for that reason feared this present crisis — for years — and if it were over, I should gladly die. But I *must* fight — and yet never in my life have I given my thought or my time so little to outside matters — whether to my family, to the orchestra, or to social duties. I've not been away from the office for even part of a day, during this summer, unless when in New York on duty — and I shall not go away. I am now arranging to send a good agent to Washington for political ends. . . . The firm will not be asked to pay for this.

I say these things to you, because you have a right to my full time and thoughts, and because I wear your name and my father's, and I do not forget it — and try to keep it bright. Life is no boon unless well used. My mother died yesterday and my daughter to-morrow — years ago. Be sure that I'll do my best by you in all ways.

Colonel Lee's reply is one of his masterpieces of whimsical, affectionate admonition:—

BEVERLY FARMS, August 18, '93.

MY DEAR HENRY:—

There is a deal of truth and also of self-deceit in your letter.

Get La Farge or some man who will charge enough, and whom you vainly imagine yourself bound to support, to paint for your home this: "Omnes non omnia possumus." One of my neighbors, partly from greed, mostly from good nature and inability to say no, undertook to work himself, horse and oxen, night and day. He died instead of living, poor instead of rich, worn out with work never thoroughly executed because too much undertaken.

Col. Stark, when leading his New Hampshire men over Charlestown Neck across which the cannon-balls were flying, marched moderately, against the remonstrances of his officers, saying, "One fresh man is worth a dozen tired ones"; and that is as true in 1893 as in 1775. Dr. Jackson performed more valuable service than any doctor, and he would not be interrupted at his meals or during his naps. You are not, and cannot be, omnipresent, mind and body; and no matter what the allurement or the entreaty, or the seeming necessity, you must calculate and choose and decline, else your life will continue to be exhausted, your spirits causelessly depressed, your time purloined, your services fitful.

You speak of your mother. She was born with too clear sight for comfort, she too toiled to accomplish, for those she loved, impossibilities, and died of the overstrain. As to my example, do not exaggerate my merits or services. I have been independent, and to a degree, and in certain directions, dutiful, but seldom overworked. A little while ago you had a most seasonable opportunity to close your career as Musical Benefactor, and, in my opinion, should have done so. You could not bear to. Will you now embrace the proper alternative and retire from a most exciting, unwholesome form of business, knowing that for some reason you cannot be cool, systematic, prudent, cannot be aided by partners, however faithful or competent, but partly from temperament, partly

from want of early business training, must always be heated and hurried. When your grandfather Lee was two years younger than you, I drove him to retirement by taking a determined stand, knowing that, if he stayed, he was doomed to reverses or the cheating he could not bear, and consequently grandmother could not bear, and also that, once out, he had plenty of resources. So will you suffer with no good to anybody; so are you able to occupy yourself without business, and so ought you to be constrained.

Let us free ourselves from cant, and not mistake love of excitement and rashness for devotion to duty.

Don't talk about my example, when you give away \$200,000 to music, or \$40,000 to \$50,000 to the Soldier's Field, for you know I have set no such example, and I also know it.

Why, when overtaxed, do you constitute yourself a guardian to an excitable Italian actress<sup>1</sup> whom you know nothing about, who has not the most remote claim on you; why allow yourself to be made President of a superfluous Club got up by people too vacant or too ignorant to know how to live in the country?

No, you are generous, you are full of benevolence inherited from father and mother, and in addition, you are weakly good-natured, and last but not least, you are addicted to excitement, which you foster by your overburdened feverish life, which ends in your being unstrung and depressed. . . .

The anxiety which weights you and all of us down now is fearful, sickening; yet in spite of the wickedness of such men as A—, counseling, from his high place in the Senate, wickedness; in spite of pitiful partisan B—, etc., etc., — I do believe that Cleveland's wise disinterested warnings will be heeded. . . .

I hope your agent may do good service. . . . 31 Dec. 1893,  
*H. L. and H. L. H. retire from business.*

Your affectionate

UNCLE H.

<sup>1</sup> Mr. and Mrs. Higginson had been showing great kindness to Madame Duse.

Probably Colonel Lee suspected that his proposal that they should both retire from business at the end of the year would be taken in a Pickwickian sense. On August 29 he made a delightful change of tactics:—

. . . Now, from this hour forward decline all outside work, be it what it may, resolutely. Even then your Music Hall and concerts, added to your business, will be more than you can find time to attend to, leaving necessary time for home and rest. You march into an undertaking voluntarily, or under an utterly false impression that you owe it to somebody to incur such labor and risk, you lose time and money — and who is to blame? Yourself and nobody else. While you go on in this monthly-nurse way, overburdened and distracted and exhausted you will be, poorly discharged will your duties be, in spite of Lanes and Jacksons and Lees and Fairchilds. If you must go on with your music, why not release me and George and yourself from this perilous mode of hardy industry? If you want to make up your losses, then abstain from all, all outside work of whatever kind, and conduct your business quietly, methodically, prudently, leaving a time for gardening, for driving (only don't deceive yourself into buying a \$1000 horse, you can't afford to kick gravel into your eyes), for seeing your friends, including Ida — and then you need not wish to die.

Your affectionate

UNCLE H.

P.S. The majority for repeal [of the Silver Purchase clause] is wonderful and we may infer that this delusion is dissipated. . . .

I would not write to anybody unless they requested it. It wastes your time, and is quite as likely to do harm as good, I believe. Congratulatory notes are welcome — but letters of advice, etc.??

The picture of a frugal, industrious, reserved, methodical man, who follows his trade, and orders his affairs discreetly,

is an august spectacle, the sight of it stimulates all to the wisest course, which, if followed by all, would make an Utopia.

Utopia in State Street! Henry Lee was far too shrewd and humorous an old gentleman to expect anything of the sort; but he was very fond of his nephew, and he liked to amuse himself with painting the "august spectacle" of a Henry Higginson miraculously converted into a frugal, reserved, methodical man. And in November, instead of persuading Major Higginson to celebrate the twenty-sixth anniversary of his becoming a member of Lee Higginson and Co. by retiring from the firm, we shall find him urging his nephew to accept the additional and very onerous burden of service on the Harvard Corporation!

The invitation reached Mr. Higginson unexpectedly while he was in New York on business. He wrote to his wife, November 28:—

. . . I've been kept here over to-night, and now wish to greet you and send you this news — that the College would like me as a Fellow of the Corporation.

Am I fit? Shall I accept? The matter has been under consideration for two months, but I never heard a word of it until to-day — and they'd *like* a reply to-morrow — for the regular meeting — so Edward [Hooper] sent word to me.

Will you telegraph me your reply?<sup>1</sup> Personally it seems to me a poor nomination — and an undeserved honor. . . .

By the same mail he wrote to Colonel Henry Lee:—

MY DEAR UNCLE:—

When an honor is offered to me, it always seems as coming by means of my ancestors, and I can only regret that my deserts have been so small. This may seem to you wrong, and yet I always feel it keenly.

<sup>1</sup> The reply was, "Accept. You deserve it. I. A. H."

And now comes one which I have craved for you thro' years and still do — but it does *not* come to you, very likely, because you've been so useful and important elsewhere, the oldest and most honored among the Overseers, the one who is always present, well as ill, rain or shine.

Edward Hooper asks if I will be a Fellow of Harvard College — a great and undeserved honor, a poor choice, a prize which I should be very glad to accept; but how can I?

You know the duties, and my qualities and my great faults. Am I fit for that place, remembering always what a choice of men is open to the College? I can't think so. Then also — I've promised you and my partners and myself that I'll undertake *nothing* without your full approval. My life belongs to my wife and child and to the house, and I've finished my outside interests, even to dinner speeches, have resigned from the University Club, have sold my horses pretty well out, have sold that piece of land, and am expecting to sell two more.

I only wish to work reasonably, and try to make good my errors.

I cannot take this place without your full approval and that of my partners, and of my wife.

You always will give me your full and frank opinion, and it has done me more good than you know. Pray do so again.

Edward asked for a reply for to-morrow. I must stay here about business to-night, and am entirely ready to be guided by you in this matter. Please believe that you cannot hurt my feelings by your candid opinion.

I do wish it were you, and it would be if you were younger.

You have deserved it, but, as I began, it is after all a greater honor to be chosen an Overseer always.<sup>1</sup>

Your aff.

H.

<sup>1</sup> This tactful remark does not correspond with the ordinary view of the relative honor involved.

Colonel Lee instantly replied:—

BOSTON, Nov. 29, 1893.

MY DEAR HENRY:—

For two months perhaps I have been holding conversations, in some of which you have taken a part, as to whom we should select for the Corporation in place of [Frederick L.] Ames. You have been wanted:—

1. For your affection for the College.
2. For their reciprocation of this feeling, Government and Students and Alumni generally.
3. For your knowledge of men and things; and
4. For your judgment.

In these consultations I have, as far as I can, acted honestly, crediting and debiting you as well as I knew how. I have been rejoiced over this because I thought that your being selected would be very gratifying, and also because I thought the occupation would be the most congenial and wholesome possible, both for the subjects treated and because of the companionship, and that this avocation offered would incline you to slip out of business and perhaps out of the Symphony business after this contract is up.

Whether you ought to engage in this new and weighty task, with all your divers distracting cares, depends on whether you will resolutely, little by little, economize your time and methodize your work, to the great relief of your partners and to the benefit of the business, or whether you will continue your miscellaneous and helter-skelter meddlesome style.

We are all very anxious you should accept such an honor, engage in such a congenial work, and equally anxious that you should amend your life.

As for me, the time has been when I felt that I might as well be in the Corporation as some who were there; but I am convinced that I should never have done for it, while as Overseer I have my uses, *perhaps*.

Your affectionate

UNCLE H.

One week later, Henry Higginson was elected a Fellow of the Corporation — one of that group of five who, together with the President and the Treasurer, form the principal governing board of Harvard University. In reply to the congratulations of Senator Lodge, he answered: —

DEAR CABOT:—

You are very kind. I cannot see the wisdom of the step, for men noted for scholarship or ability or knowledge in some large field are usually and rightly chosen. But the great honor is offered to me — and tho' I at first wished to decline it, my advisers have given other counsel. *I* know how little good the College will get from me. The kind words of many men and women whom I hold in esteem, as I do you, are very touching. What a wretched failure a man is in his own eyes! . . .

Was he a failure in the eyes of others?

"The kind of man needed in the governing board of a university," says President Eliot,<sup>1</sup> "is the highly educated, public-spirited, business or professional man, who takes a strong interest in educational and social problems, and believes in the higher education as the source of enlightenment and progress for all stages of education, and for all the industrial and social interests of the community. He should also be a man who has been successful in his own calling, and commands the confidence of all who know him. The faculty he will most need is good judgment; for he will often be called upon to decide on matters which lie beyond the scope of his own experience, and about which he must, therefore, get his facts through others, and his opinions through a process of comparison and judicious shifting.

"The best number of members for a university's principal governing board is seven; because that number of men can sit

<sup>1</sup> *University Administration*, by Charles W. Eliot (Boston and New York, 1908), p. 2.

round a small table, talk with each other informally without waste of words or any display or pretence, provide an adequate diversity of points of view and modes of dealing with the subject in hand, and yet be prompt and efficient in the despatch of business. In a board of seven the different professions and callings can be sufficiently represented."

How completely did Henry Higginson fulfil these requirements of the kind of man needed? He served under two chiefs, President Eliot from 1893 to 1909, and President Lowell from 1909 to 1919. The testimony of both should be given here. President Eliot wrote on November 14, 1919,—as it happened, the very day of Major Higginson's death, although the article was intended to appear in honor of his approaching eighty-fifth birthday on November 18,—as follows:—

"His chief direct service has been that he served as a Fellow in the Corporation for twenty-six years, 1893–1919, with the utmost punctuality, assiduity, and devotion, and with intelligence. Why was he chosen a member of the Corporation? Not because he was a successful banker and broker on State Street. Far from it. He was chosen because he was as fine an exemplar of the patriotic citizen-soldier as there was in the country or the world; because he gave the University two great gifts — one the Soldier's Field, on which he hoped that manly sports of many kinds would be generously cultivated through long generations of Harvard youth, and on which he erected a monument to youthful friends of his who fell in the Civil War, and the Harvard Union, where he hoped that democracy and good-fellowship among Harvard students would be forever cultivated; because he had proved himself to be the most successful promoter of good music that Eastern Massachusetts had ever known; and because he was the intimate friend of Alexander Agassiz, a great naturalist and a great administrator in varied fields, who had already served two terms in the Corporation, the last of which closed in 1890; and because the Corporation of that day knew no better example of the public

spirit and courage which had made New England what it then was. The expectations and purposes with which the Corporation of 1893 elected Major Higginson a member of the Board have been completely fulfilled. All men who love Harvard rejoice with Major Higginson at the striking fruits of his noble career."<sup>1</sup>

President Lowell writes, February 16, 1921:—

"There are, as you know, two ways in which a member of a Governing Board can be of great use. One is by his perception of the policy the institution ought to pursue and his wisdom in deciding questions that come before the Board. In this Mr. Higginson was not lacking; but his really great contribution was in the second way — that is, in supporting, helping, encouraging, and smoothing the path for those who carry the burden of the administration. It was not only that he did his work well as a member of the Corporation; it was also that I did my work better because he was there, and so, I think, did every man in the service of the University. His sympathy, his active comprehension of the human element in a man's work, made a great difference. When he thought a thing was well done, he said so, and infused a spirit of doing it better still; nor would he hesitate to say a thing was not well done if he thought so. His sympathy went out, also, in the giving of his time and strength. If we wanted to bring a powerful influence to bear upon undergraduate conduct, he was always ready to address a meeting of students, and did it with effect. These are the chief traits of his work as they lie in my mind, and they are very unusual and very valuable ones. They make for the vitality of the whole institution."

The labor and responsibility required of a member of the Corporation are exacting. The Fellows are elected for life. They meet once a fortnight, usually for a four-hours' morning

<sup>1</sup> *Harvard Alumni Bulletin*, Nov. 27, 1919.

session,<sup>1</sup> and in addition there is a great variety of committee work. The associations involved are naturally intimate, and Major Higginson owed some of his warmest friendships to the relations thus established.<sup>2</sup> The master-key of his own action, as a member of the Harvard and Radcliffe governing boards, was personal loyalty to his chief. He had plenty of ideas of his own, — although not always the greatest confidence in them, — but his instinctive first question was: what does "Charles Eliot" or "Lawrence Lowell" or "Mrs. Agassiz" want done? That they wanted it was often enough for him. Accustomed as he was to individual responsibility, and unafraid of the word "autocracy," he was singularly deferential in council. At an age when many men grow captious and intolerant, he showed a cheerful willingness to "throw his mind into the common pot" — which was Gladstone's test of a good cabinet minister. One of his later colleagues, in fact, thinks that Major Higginson's conciliatory spirit, and instinctive desire to think nobly of men and measures, was his chief service to the Corporation.

He had many intimate friends, of course, among the Overseers and the Faculty, and his correspondence reveals his warm and generous interest in almost every phase of University life. Yet his own instinct led him, from the first, straight to the undergraduates. It was for the "boys" that he gave Soldiers Field. His only son, Alexander, had entered Harvard in 1894,

<sup>1</sup> H. L. H.'s speech to the Associated Harvard Clubs in Chicago, 1906: "I have been in the Corporation twelve years, and that president of ours (who can lift as much as anybody in this room) does not seem to have any tire in him. He puts us to work at half-past ten in the morning, and if we get to lunch at half-past two, we are doing well."

<sup>2</sup> During his first years of service there were many changes in the Board. John Quincy Adams died in 1894, and Martin Brimmer in 1896. William C. Endicott retired in 1895. Dr. Henry P. Walcott is now (1921) the only member of the Corporation whose service antedates that of Major Higginson. Charles Francis Adams, 2d, succeeded Edward Hooper as Treasurer in 1898. Major Higginson had four younger associates who died in office between 1904 and 1919: Samuel Hoar, Francis C. Lowell, Arthur T. Cabot, and Robert Bacon. Of the members of the Corporation in 1921, President Lowell, Henry P. Walcott, Thomas Nelson Perkins, William Lawrence, John F. Moors, and Charles Francis Adams were all colleagues of Major Higginson.

and for four years the father had been brought into close contact with undergraduates and their problems. One result of this quickened interest was his gift, in 1899, of the Harvard Union.

The Harvard undergraduates of that epoch have recently been described by one of the most gifted of their number, Professor George Santayana, 1886:—

"The students were intelligent, ambitious, remarkably able to 'do things'; they were keen about the matters that had already entered into their lives, and invincibly happy in their ignorance of everything else. A gentle contempt for the past permeated their judgments. . . . About high questions of politics and religion their minds were open but vague; they seemed not to think them of practical importance; they acquiesced in people having any views they liked on such subjects; the fluent and fervid enthusiasms so common among European students, prophesying about politics, philosophy and art, were entirely unknown among them. . . . Life, for the undergraduates, was full of droll incidents and broad farce; it drifted good-naturedly from one commonplace thing to another. . . . It was an idyllic, haphazard, humoristic existence, without fine imagination, without any familiar infusion of scholarship, without articulate religion: a flutter of intelligence in a void, flying into trivial play, in order to drop back, as soon as college days were over, into the drudgery of affairs. There was the love of beauty, but without the sight of it; for the bits of pleasant landscape or the world of art which might break the ugliness of the foreground were a sort of æsthetic miscellany, enjoyed as one enjoys a museum; there was nothing in which the spirit of beauty was deeply interfused, charged with passion and discipline and intricate familiar associations with delicate and noble things. . . . The young had their own ways, which on principle were to be fostered and respected; and one of their instincts was to associate only with those of their own age and calibre. The young were simply young, and

the old simply old, as among peasants. Teachers and pupils seemed animals of different species, useful and well-disposed towards each other, like a cow and a milkmaid; periodic contributions could pass between them, but not conversation. . . ."<sup>1</sup>

Was it possible to create at Harvard "conversation," as it was known at Oxford and Cambridge in England; to create that keen intelligence for public affairs, for contemporary questions of art and literature, which characterizes the foremost universities of the Continent? One man, at least, believed so, William Roscoe Thayer, whom Major Higginson afterward described as "the father of the Union."<sup>2</sup> For four years, beginning in 1895, Mr. Thayer advocated his idea, backed by the "Crimson" and various committees; until, in 1899, Major Higginson offered \$150,000 for the building. A few sentences from his letters to Mrs. Higginson, who was then in the South, reveal his attitude toward the new enterprise.

*November 3, 1899:* The papers have the Harvard Union plan, and men are very kind with their notes and words. Meanwhile the students have asked for a "ratification meeting" on Monday at Sanders, and I shall go, of course, and say a few words of our ideas about the Union, for men will easily misunderstand its purpose, and we need the support of everyone.

*November 4, 1899:* I've sundry nice letters to show you, for people are much pleased, and excellent men think it has been a sore need at Cambridge.

<sup>1</sup> *Character and Opinion in the United States*, by George Santayana; New York, 1920.

<sup>2</sup> "To the conception of William Roscoe Thayer it is that we owe the act of Major Higginson. . . . He allowed no rest to some of us until that idea assumed a substantial form. . . . Meetings inspired by him were held, and committees organized. Of these committees I was the figurehead, he was the efficient force. . . . At last the giver was found in the person of my familiar and life-long friend." — Charles Francis Adams, '56, in the address at the opening of the Harvard Union, Oct. 15, 1901. *Harvard Graduates' Magazine*, Dec., 1901.

*November 10, 1899:* Morris G. spoke of a fine young graduate from Brookline, who after his four years knew no more boys than at the beginning. It is a pity and we must stop it.

*November 12, 1899:* I'm still pruning my words for to-morrow, and would make them worthy of the cause; for this club may become a strong influence in college life, and I would make the boys see it — an influence against selfishness and snobbishness. Men are in earnest about it. I will try to tell you of my plans. They simmer in my head and take no shape, until suddenly they come into being.

Of the many "nice notes" which he was saving to show to his wife, the one from Charles Francis Adams may be quoted:—

**DEAR HENRY:—**

I this morning got your note. I envy you. I would like to have done that! That is your monument, and like a wise man, you have not waited to erect it after death. Now hold on to your wisdom. Concentrate on that, and do not let anyone else touch it. Don't have any partners! Let that be all yours.

In future, — a hundred years hence, — that building will make of you more of a household word at Harvard, than Hollworthy, Stoughton or Hollis. You will go directly home to the daily social life of all the students. You will not be an abstraction; you will be a reality. All this in a far-away future.

One thing in connection with this gift I reserve to myself. I propose to give to the club a full-length portrait of you, to be fitted into the wall over the big fire-place in the main sitting-room. A portrait which shall, for all time, familiarize the students with the giver of the edifice. That shall be my contribution. Accordingly we must look about for an artist. . . . Meanwhile you have done the best day's work in your life — and you have before done many good days' work, and you have done it betimes. You have put yourself in the intimate daily

life of the students before John Harvard was. I wish I could have got ahead of you. It only remains for me to associate myself with you, — which I propose to do. . . .

And William James wrote from London:—

*Nov. 17, '99.*

MY DEAR HENRY:—

Some good angel inspired our neighbor Taussig to write me a letter which reached here night before last, and in which, amongst other pieces of news, he tells of your gift for the University Club. He couples therewith some remarks on your character, of which, in spite of the danger of appearing fulsome, I will transcribe one sentence: "He will never be done with good deeds until he dies; and even then (*pace* Shakespeare) the memory of him ought to bring forth more and more of them *in perpetuas aeternitates*." I also, as a humble member of the University, wish to thank you. The Club must inevitably become an institution of the greatest use to the rank and file of the college and schools, and a great additional factor in leaving in them an affectionate memory of the place. I don't like you personally, my dear Henry, but on this occasion I join in the general Rah, rah, rah, you glorious old man! . . .

The "ratification meeting" in Sanders Theatre, on November 13, 1899, was crowded and enthusiastic, and Major Higginson's words were certainly "worthy of the cause," as he had hoped. A few paragraphs must suffice to show their spirit:—

Harvard College is not the corner-stone of the Republic, but it tries to furnish fit material for the building up of the Republic, — men of education, of high purpose and power to execute, men of character who will look their fellows in the face and speak the truth, — good public and private citizens.

Such is the task of every university in our beautiful land, and for this task Harvard must be thoroughly equipped. For this equipment is needed, besides teachers, lectures, and books, the freest and fullest intercourse between the students. . . .

Is there a better or sweeter thing on earth than the free and close intimacy of young fellows, discussing everything on earth and in heaven, tossing the ball from one to another, lifting each other to a higher plane, as healthy, earnest boys will, and thus learning to know their comrades and themselves?

This great blessing and all others the University earnestly seeks for you, and in due course it will require of you full results. The government of the University has steadily striven to offer the largest opportunities for instruction,—lecture-rooms, dormitories, athletic buildings and grounds,—and thus has drawn an ever-growing stream of students to its doors. And by this very action it has unwittingly imperiled the comradeship and social life of the University. The old clubs, with their happy traditions, are delightful; but their membership is small, and entails expenses too large for most young men. Thus have crept in habits of exclusiveness and of luxury in living which hurt our democratic university. President Hadley of Yale, in his inaugural address, noted well this fact as a serious evil at New Haven. In latter years, many a boy has lived through a lonely course here and gone away as lonely as he came.

We cannot bear such a result, cannot tolerate this sense of isolation; and, further, we must see to it that young men entering our University stand on a footing equal in all respects, until they themselves, by their merits or faults, have raised or lowered it. Any other basis implies a failure in the system of our University, which, in the name of true civilization, we will strive to avert.

A Harvard student needs and has the right to every advantage which the government of the University can give. Neither

books, nor lectures, nor games can replace the benefits arising from free intercourse with all his companions — the education of friendship. The proverb says, "We have as many uses for friendship as for fire and water."

Therefore, we will build a great house on college grounds, and vest it in the President and Fellows of the Corporation. We will call it the Harvard Union, and it shall be the meeting-house of all Harvard men — alumni, students, teachers. It shall pay to the University a full rental for its land, and meet its own expenses, as a condition of its being, and it shall be beholden to nobody but to Harvard men and Harvard lovers. It shall have large, simple, comfortable rooms; ample space for reading, study, games, conversation; and a great hall, where all may meet and hold the freest talk in public. In this house should centre all the college news, of work, athletics, sport, of public affairs; and there, we hope, may be found a corner and a chair and a bit of supper for the old and homeless alumni from other cities. . . .

The Harvard Union will in no way antagonize the other clubs, which are so pleasant and so useful; but it needs the support of our whole University world. Note well that fact. Therefore, we will urge every living Harvard man to join us for his sake and ours.

The setting-up of such a meeting-house is a little matter, but the holding-up of it on a large-minded, generous, lasting basis is a great matter, and is impossible unless you, one and all, make it easy. Change it, develop it, do with it what you will, so you keep its character; but use it constantly and in a kindly spirit, and in later life come back to it as to your home.

Just one more point: To whom the conception of a Harvard Union is due is beyond my knowledge;<sup>1</sup> but we owe the fostering of the idea to many men, and we owe the grounds to the Corporation. As you see, it is the result of Harvard teamwork, of mutual reliance, the future abiding-place of comrade-

<sup>1</sup> He had not then learned of Mr. Thayer's service in initiating the idea.

ship; and therefore let it never and in no place bear any name except that of JOHN HARVARD. We will nail open the doors of our house, and will write over them:—

*The Harvard Union welcomes to its home all Harvard men.*

Two years passed before the Union was ready for occupancy. The new Symphony Hall was building at the same time, and Mr. Higginson's correspondence with architects and builders, and professorial experts like Ira N. Hollis and Wallace C. Sabine, shows his endless interest in details. He was in Europe in the summer of 1901; but on October 15, immediately after his return, came the formal dedication of the Union. The great hall, one hundred feet by forty, was packed with students and alumni. Charles Francis Adams, '56, who presided, was in his best vein, and there were speeches by President Eliot, Malcolm Donald, '99, and James Hazen Hyde, '98, who had given \$20,000 for the Union Library. Mr. Higginson, the last speaker, uttered some eloquent words about friendship and hospitality:—

. . . Our new house is built in the belief that here also will dwell this same spirit of democracy side by side with the spirit of true comradeship, friendship; but to-day this house is a mere shell, a body into which you, Harvard students, and you alone can breathe life, and then, by a constant and generous use of it, educate yourselves and each other.

Looking back in life I can see no earthly good which has come to me, so great, so sweet, so uplifting, so consoling, as the friendship of the men and the women whom I have known well and loved — friends who have been equally ready to give and to receive kind offices and timely counsel.

Is there anything more delightful than the ties between young fellows which spring up and strengthen in daily college life — friendships born of sympathy, confidence, and affection as yet untouched by the interests and claims of later life?

We older men would offer to you a garden in which such saplings will grow until they become the oaks to whose shade you may always return for cheer and for rest in your victories and your troubles. Be sure that you will have both, for the one you will win and the other you must surely meet; and when they come, nothing will steady and strengthen you like real friends, who will speak the frank words of truth tempered by affection — friends who will help you and never count the cost. . . .

One point pray note. The house will fail of its full purpose unless there is always a warm corner for that body of men who devote themselves to the pursuit of knowledge and to your instruction — the whole staff of Harvard University, from our distinguished and honored President, the professors, librarians, and instructors, to the youngest proctor. And if you see an older graduate enter the hall, go and sit beside him, tell him the college news, and make him a welcome guest, for this is the house of friendship. He wants your news and he likes boys, else he would not have come. Old men are more shy of boys than boys of old men. I have been one and am the other — and ought to know. Like the Arabs, nail open your doors and offer freely to all comers the salt of hospitality, for it is a great and a charming virtue. . . .

In these halls may you, young men, see visions and dream dreams, and may you keep steadily burning the fire of high ideals, enthusiasm, and hope, otherwise you cannot share in the great work and glory of our new century. Already this century is bringing to you younger men questions and decisions to the full as interesting and as vital as the last century brought to us. Every honor is open to you, and every victory, if only you will dare, will strive strongly, and will persist. . . .

In closing, he referred to the recent death of President McKinley, and exclaimed: "May God keep safe and guide aright our fellow graduate, Theodore Roosevelt, President of the United States!"

A few days later came this letter:—

EXECUTIVE MANSION, WASHINGTON

*October 19, 1901.*

MY DEAR MAJOR HIGGINSON:—

I have just heard of the close of your address at the Harvard reunion, in which you wished me well with such impressive sincerity. It has touched me deeply, and I thank you for it.

Faithfully yours,

THEODORE ROOSEVELT.

President Eliot had already written:—

CAMBRIDGE, 17 Oct., '01.

MY DEAR HIGGINSON:—

Meditating yesterday on that delightful meeting Tuesday evening, I perceived that your public benefactions have had a consistent purpose which has very rarely been so well carried into effect. You have succeeded in promoting, in a community of Puritan origin, things that make for good health, good fellowship, and genuine happiness — namely, music, out-of-door sports, and wholesome sociability under pleasant conditions.

Certainly your many acts of public spirit have a unique and wholly admirable quality. You and yours ought to have heartfelt satisfaction in them.

Sincerely yours,

CHARLES W. ELIOT.

The visitor to the Harvard Union to-day will see in the great living-room Sargent's magnificent portrait of Major Higginson — seated, with his cavalry cloak thrown across his knees. It was given, not by a private donor, but by a subscription from undergraduates.<sup>1</sup> The Union, after various

<sup>1</sup> At a meeting of the Associated Harvard Clubs in Cincinnati in 1909, Mr. Higginson told this story about the portrait:—

"Let me give one further illustration, which makes me choke every time I think of it. It is purely egotistical. When the students were trying to get money for a

vicissitudes, has become an indispensable factor in the life of the University. That it has accomplished all that was first dreamed for it, no one would claim. The ideal community of scholars, like democracy itself, is always arriving — and it never quite arrives.<sup>3</sup> Yet for a score of years the Union has striven to approximate those early visions of its possible service. It has given something of a home to otherwise homeless individuals and organizations, and it has been the scene of many remarkable gatherings.

One of these must be mentioned. It will be remembered that, shortly before President Eliot's retirement in 1909, there was much talk of Theodore Roosevelt, among others, as a possible successor. Major Higginson, as a member of the Corporation, was of course deeply interested in their choice, and his friends will recall that he used to carry in his pocket a list of the various names which had been suggested for the approaching vacancy. It was even a longer list than that of his twenty-two possible directors for the Symphony Orchestra, and he would pull it out, with his teasing, quizzical smile, and

portrait of myself to put in the Harvard Union, they went around and asked for it of the various men in College. (I want you to understand that the students paid for that portrait and put it there. They asked John Sargent to paint it, and he did.) One of the men who was looking for money came to College House where the poor fellows live, and asked: 'Is there anybody upstairs here?' He was told there was a chap up in the attic, but that he had no money. He went up, looked in the door, and found the man cooking supper at the fireplace. He drew back and shut the door behind him. But the man came after him and said, 'What do you want?' — 'I don't want anything.' — 'Yes, you do, you came for something; what did you come for?' — 'Well,' said he, 'some money for that portrait.' The man said, 'Well, here, I have got thirty-two cents. I am going to-night to the wharf for work; I will give you twenty-five cents.' Can any of you do better than that, gentlemen? That fellow was paying twenty-five cents out of the thirty-two cents to paint a portrait of me, because he thought he wished to do it. (Applause.) If we have men of that sort, if men come there and go through college by working at night on the wharves as that man was doing — we are all right!"

<sup>3</sup> In 1919 the Union was taken over by the University authorities. The title of the property is now vested in the President and Fellows, who appoint a Graduate Manager. A Governing Board, chosen annually, directs the policy of "the club-house for social purposes for members of Harvard University." Since this change was made, the Union has entered upon a period of great activity and success.

ask for additions and corrections. No one could tell how far he was serious. But his friend William James suspected that Major Higginson's personal fondness for Roosevelt did not carry with it the fullest conviction as to Roosevelt's fitness for this particular post.

He had written to the Major:—

"Think of the virtues of Roosevelt, either as permanent sovereign of this great country, or as President of H. U. I've been having a discussion with X—— about him, which has resulted in making me his faithful henchman for life, X—— was so violent. Think of the mighty good-will of him, of his enjoyment of his post, of his power as a preacher, of the number of things to which he gives attention, of the safety of his second thoughts, of the increased courage he is showing, and above all, of the fact that he is an open, instead of an underground leader. . . . Bless him — and d—— all his detractors like you and X——. . . ."<sup>1</sup>

To this Major Higginson replied:—

. . . His great virtues and his high character are indisputable, and his tremendous energy and courage should be used for the public good; but in the first place, I do not believe that he could give up the very large field in which he has lived and wrought such great things, and be happy in a quiet, studious atmosphere of Yankee scholars. Next, we need a man of much judgment, and is judgment to be found coupled with such enormous energy? This last thought has always perplexed my mind, but I believe the two things to be almost always incompatible. You philosophers know the correctness of my thought. . . . If I may be allowed to say so, I judge somewhat by myself, as I always wish to do things my own way and to see things as I wish, being very narrow-minded and self-willed. Luckily, I've always lived, from my young boyhood to the present time, with men and women greatly

<sup>1</sup> This letter is printed in full in the *Letters of William James*, vol. II, p. 232.

my superiors. . . . Can a man be of any real use or value in this life unless he knows what a limited and damned fool he is?

Then came a speech by President Roosevelt in the Harvard Union, where he seems to have captivated most of the "detractors." Henry Higginson wrote to Senator Lodge, February 25, 1907:—

. . . We had great pleasure in seeing the President. He was pleasant, jolly — indeed, full of fun; talked to the students in excellent fashion, and was very friendly (as he always is) to me when I had the pleasure of seeing him at Bishop Lawrence's. I agree to a dot with what he says about play and study, and also about the duty of these young men to their country. As he went along, I could not help thinking how he was saying just what was in my mind, and saying it very much better than I could. It was very wholesome talk, and the students enjoyed it immensely. One of them is sitting in my office now, and has said that very thing to me. It was really a great sight to see those boys packed as close as herrings, and see a lot of the teachers up in the gallery, and see the general enthusiasm of welcome and eagerness to hear what the President had to say. . . .

Alas! however, for the orator who has to please with the same speech the "boys packed as close as herrings," and the "teachers up in the gallery!" For among those teachers in the gallery was William James.

"You remember one day," he wrote to Henry Higginson in 1909, "when I tried to convert you to the notion of Roosevelt as a Harvard President. He ceased to be my candidate after his speech to the men in the Harvard Union, in which, altho' he praised scientific research, there was n't otherwise a single note of elevation or distinction in anything he said. Just the

ordinary street-level talk of fairness and courage, and down with molly-coddles, meaning by them all the men with courage enough to oppose *him*. I gave him up! At the same time I believe his influence on our public life and on our people's feelings about public life has been of enormous value. . . ."

It is natural, in telling the story of Henry Higginson's interest in University affairs, to speak first of his chief services to Harvard. But these were only a part of his friendly concern for the American college everywhere. "Mates, the Princeton and the Yale fellows are our brothers," he had exclaimed in the Soldiers Field address, and everyone knew that he meant it. The sons of Eli and of Old Nassau have sometimes been puzzled by certain representatives of Harvard, but they had no difficulty in placing Major Higginson. In the undergraduate vernacular, he was "all right." It is pleasant to know that the key-note of the Soldiers Field speech — "all these dead men would have done a great deal for the world, and I *must* do what lies in my power to carry out their will"<sup>1</sup> — found a singularly fitting response from Yale. On December 9, 1892, Major Higginson had entertained the Yale and Harvard football teams at dinner in the University Club at Boston. Among the older guests was the Rev. Dr. Joseph H. Twichell, — a member of the Yale Corporation and a famous army chaplain, — who held a place in the affection of Yale men very similar to that enjoyed by Henry Higginson in Cambridge. Shortly after Christmas he wrote to Major Higginson from Hartford: —

DEAR COL. HIGGINSON: —

The beautiful copy of "The Soldier's Field" which you sent me was, to my feeling, the crown of my Christmas gifts this time. Thank you kindly for it. If it were framed in gold, it would not, in my eye, be too richly dressed.

<sup>1</sup> H. L. H. to Edward W. Hooper, June 15, 1900.

I thank you also for offering me additional copies, should I desire them. I expressed to Mr. Bacon, beside whom I had the good luck to be seated at the dinner, my wish that every member of the Yale team might have one. If they have not been furnished with them, I should feel it a privilege to be the medium of their supply. Yes, and I would exceedingly like to have a moderate stock on hand for future use — to give out now and then to Yale boys of my acquaintance who are to take part in intercollegiate contests.

Would God I could preach a sermon half as well worth circulating! — with half as much essential Christianity in it, I mean.

Thank you too for your letter. I think that, to us fellows who went to the war, the memory of those noble and dear spirits it parted from us forever for this world is freighted with the same perennial sacred meaning.

What you said it meant to you brought to my mind, dimly, a passage of a Decoration Day address I made away back some time in the sixties. So I hunted it up to see exactly what it was. And here it is.

"For one, I own myself called to double duty. For the friend with whose life, a little while ago, my own was most entirely mingled, — the man I loved, — for whose sake I think I would have died, lies now beneath the mound of a soldier's grave, a bullet through his true heart, the cold marble standing sentinel over his dear remains. As my thoughts wander away to seek the place, and I read the inscription 'Aged 27,' I feel that I have not only my work to do in life, but his also."

I was young when I said that. To-day I would repeat it; but in that manifold deeper sense of its import which you have expressed. I feel just as you do — and the more so, the older I grow.

When Major Higginson received his honorary degree of LL.D. from Yale in 1901, he was characterized by President

Hadley as "the ideal Harvard man." His zest for contributing to the funds of other colleges than his own was insatiable, and both Yale and Princeton made chivalrous response. I quote a portion of a letter written by a Princeton Trustee in 1909:—

DEAR MAJ. HIGGINSON:—

Of all the innumerable fine things which you have done in your life, about the finest was that unsolicited gift of the Harvard Fellowship to Princeton. I have been longing ever since to be in position to get even with you, and am happy to say that I have at last arrived.

You will confer a great favor upon me if you will ascertain if the authorities of Harvard University will accept a similar gift from me to endow a Princeton Fellowship at Harvard, on the same general terms under which you gave your Fellowship to Princeton. If so, I shall be very glad, after the turn of the year, to send you my check for \$10,000 for this purpose. . . .

"This gift from Princeton," wrote President Lowell to Mr. Higginson, "will help to cement the kind feeling, and the sentiment that after all we are working for something higher and larger than the prosperity of our own institutions, as we are common servants of a common country."

He made generous and quiet benefactions to Williams, to the University of Virginia, and to a multitude of other colleges and schools. I recall a Commencement dinner at the University of Virginia, when President Alderman announced a liberal gift from a donor who refused to let his name be known. But the President then proceeded to read aloud a portion of a very characteristic letter. It began: "My friend Charles Eliot tells me that you are trying to raise an endowment fund," and then followed some abrupt humorous sentences about an enclosed check and the request for secrecy. "I wish I could show you the signature," said President Alderman, turning to his guest

from Massachusetts. But it needed no signature to identify one of Henry Higginson's inimitable notes.

"I am tearing my shirt," he wrote to Senator Lodge in 1901, "to get a few remaining dollars for a professorship of economics at Washington and Lee University, to which I attach the greatest importance." It may be added that he had a delightfully peremptory fashion of summoning his friends to help in these worthy causes. Generally they surrendered promptly.

Single-handed, Major Higginson undertook such enterprises as the founding of the Morristown School in New Jersey, though he would never allow his name to be mentioned; and he gave freely to the Middlesex and other schools in New England. Time and time again he furnished the Boston Symphony Orchestra, at his own expense, for academic celebrations in New Haven, Princeton, and Williamstown. He was a Director and endower of the American Academy in Rome. In 1901 he accepted Mr. Carnegie's invitation to become a trustee of the Carnegie Institution. The iron-master's notes are most characteristic:—

COL. HENRY L. HIGGINSON.

DEAR SIR:—

I am about to transfer ten millions of 5% bonds to a body of Trustees for the purposes described in the enclosed paper. A list of the Trustees selected is also enclosed. It will be a source of much pleasure to me if you will kindly consent to serve.

Very truly yours,

ANDREW CARNEGIE.

A second note deals with the selection of a President for the Institution:—

*April 2nd, 1904.*

GRAND HOTEL DU CAP, ANTIBES (A.M.)

MY DEAR FRIEND:—

Sorry your note finds me beyond your circuit. I am not apprehensive about the Committee's selection, not one whit.

They will select the best man for a trial, that's all — the one who seems to them most likely to prove *the* man for the place, but after all by his fruits ye shall know him. Preconceived notions of a man's ability and suitability for a new position are of little value. Such is my own experience. Many an able Colonel have I promoted to Brigadier Generalship, to find his qualities did n't stretch. I reproach myself with the ill health of several, and the death of more than one. Therefore, my friend, the Committee trying a man will, I know, watch him closely, give him rope more or less to see just what he amounts to in his new untried and dizzy height. . . .

During the years when Mr. Carnegie's friend Dr. Pritchett was serving as President of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Major Higginson came into intimate relations with him. The welfare of the Technology students was constantly upon the Harvard Fellow's mind. The following note will represent many similar ones.

DEAR MR. PRITCHETT:—

Mrs. Pritchett last night spoke of a freshman at the head of his class on \$3 a week. "Nichts kommt heraus!" *Lend* the boy \$200, to be spent on *food* and to be returned to me when he can. Do this if you think it best. Business loan secured by his character. Don't give me away to *anyone* and send for the money if you wish.      Yrs.

H. L. HIGGINSON.

The occasion for the second and even more delightful note was an attack by a Boston preacher upon the beer-drinking habits of "Tech." students:—

*Feb. 11th, 1902.*

MY DEAR DR. PRITCHETT:—

Is it not a pity that so many geese exist, and more especially in the church? and what has our Saviour to do with beer-

drinking? I hate beer, and want no wine or liquor, and should be glad to suppress them, but feel just so about lobsters and salad of all kinds. Mince-pie I like, but they've nothing to do with the church or religion. Indigestion is injurious and foolish, and has come to me oftener from water in excess than from rum or pie — but the church likes water.

Next they'll ask you how often your boys bathe, whether in hot or cold water, and if they use soap which floats.

Every time you say a word in public, I wish I had said it. The church suffers more from the priesthood than from us sinners, or even sin. It is a great and beneficent institution badly run, but Gordon and Bishop Lawrence are *good*. I'm *very* sorry we can't dine with you, but are tied up. Remember that I've a preferred claim on your hall for the boys — as a builder. Play fair with me, for it is the only way to win games. \$10,000 on it.

Yours truly,

H. L. HIGGINSON.

That Mr. Higginson could be wisely tolerant of youthful folly, without condoning anything dishonorable, is shown by his comment on the now forgotten "Med. Fac." episode at Harvard in 1905. Dean Hurlbut had handled a most difficult question of discipline with such courage and originality as to bring about the voluntary suppression of the ancient "Med. Fac." organization. Mr. Higginson wrote to Dean Briggs:—

Touching this Med. Fac. matter, — Dean Hurlbut's letter, yours and [E. S.] Martin's I have read, and glanced at the "Herald" editorial. Dean Hurlbut's plan seems to me clever and sound; and it is ingenious and kindly. No right-minded man will fail to condemn as foolish and childish and distinctly wrong any such action as that of the Med. Fac. the other day. It is not nearly as bad a prank as took place by men in and out of the Med. Fac. when I was in college, and since then. The

worst prank I ever knew of was very dishonest and very bold and was repeated because of a challenge to repeat it. The men were among the best in college — two or three of them very high-minded men indeed. I asked one, who was an intimate of mine, why they did it, and he said: "Because we were in a morbid state of mind and did n't care what happened, and we wanted something to arouse us." He had gone armed with a bludgeon. I asked him if he meant to use it, and he said "Yes."—"And did you recognize that you might kill a man by so doing?" He said, "Yes; and I should have used it." He was shot dead in the war, like many good fellows.

The only surviving man of this crowd is the highly honorable, trustworthy president of a savings bank — good in every respect, and has been so for fifty years, to my knowledge. He was simply a first-class jackass on those occasions and, for the time being, a criminal. I expressed to these men great disgust at their prank, and they simply laughed. They all of them led very fine, or, at least (lacking one case only), a decent life. It would have done no good to send any of them to jail; it would have done them all good to be whipped. The object of discipline is to make men go straight and not to hurt them, and I don't believe any punishment would have stopped any future proceedings of the Med. Fac.

By this move of Dean Hurlbut's he has united all parties in the wish to wipe out the Med. Fac. The present and ancient members of that society have agreed to do everything in their power to squelch it now and for all time. The other students at Cambridge wish to get rid of it; the government of the College wishes to get rid of it. Everybody is united in this measure. It is one thing to be a jackass and another thing to break one's solemn word, and I think it is doing a lot of good fellows a rank injustice to suppose that they, respectable citizens of the community and foolish students (who, nevertheless, are honorable in the ordinary sense of the word),

will promise solemnly to do a thing and then break their word.

As to the rubbish of supposing that these boys or any of them are let off because they belong to well-to-do people, rather than to poor people, it is a mean thing to say. It will puzzle anybody to find an instance in a great while in the history of the University that any such distinction has been made by the government of the University or by any prominent member of it.

As to these young men deserving punishment, leave that for the law. Dear me! if we all were spanked every time we deserved a spanking in this life, what a sorry time we should have! It is a brilliant, generous, human effort to straighten out some foolish boys and get rid of a real evil; and, so far as my word goes, Dean Hurlbut has my sympathy and support, and so have you.

As for Martin's letter, he was as pungent as he was humorous, but then he can't help it.

What is the use of growing old if one cannot have a soft spot for folly? I have seen and committed more acts of folly than the whole senior class, probably, and have not been punished as often as I should have been. Young people are very fond of talking of getting one's deserts, but I don't want mine, nor do most old people. Deliver us from the temptation of making forcibly others do right — and read [Sill's] "The Fool's Prayer." It was written for me and on account of me. . . .

[P.S.] Tell Hurlbut my opinion if he wants it.

It is not strange that a man of such human qualities should touch the imagination of undergraduates. Sometimes, of course, they thought Major Higginson a trifle Quixotic, as when, for instance, he declared at the Yale-Harvard football dinner: "It may be that soon we shall see a football captain sending one of his own men off the field for unfair play. Who

so fit to do it as he?" That phenomenon has not yet been observed. Yet one way to hasten the millennium is to believe that it is coming; and when Major Higginson went to New Haven in 1898, in the Tavern Club car, to see the Yale game, he wrote to his wife: "We saw our lads play a very handsome game and beat Yale 17 to 0, fairly. I saw no bad manners at all and think there were none." And as a matter of fact, that was a notably clean game.

It was in the nineties that Major Higginson began his long series of brief Memorial Day speeches at Harvard. A letter to Colonel Henry Lee (May 24, 1892) asks advice about details of the ceremonial: —

MY DEAR UNCLE: —

The note to the students suited them, and convinced them — but they need something to start them, something to gather for, beyond the usual flower-tribute, which has become perfunctory. Richard Norton came in to see me last night, talked it over, and wanted to gain this point.

We suggested the reading of President Lincoln's Gettysburg address, — 3 minutes long, — or the last stanza from Mr. Lowell's Ode, or both, or something else. Finally, it was suggested that I should repeat my letter of yesterday — in effect — and then read this address of Mr. Lincoln's — *i.e.*, Richard asked if I would do so, the boys singing a song or two, laying their flowers on the tablet, and all over in 15 minutes. I said that I'd do it, if the boys wished it — and he came in to-day to beg that I would.

That is all simple — is none of mine — is healthy, and the address is a jewel. Does this please you?

Have you any suggestions to make? Shall I read also that last stanza of Mr. Lowell's Ode? I should like to do the right thing, be *very* short, hear a song — and keep *every* personal element and all "slop" out of it.

You see such things in your mind's eye and will know what

to say. I begged Richard to see that it was well arranged, without formalities of college-officers or the like, *all* done by the boys, vigorously, and finished quickly.

These boys never meant to ask for anything but a word or two from me and even that as a *point d'appui*, as a crowd of lads are hard to start. And they all hope and ask earnestly that the older graduates will come.

If only the custom of singing and flowers and nothing more can be begun, I think some good will have been accomplished; but I await your judgment, tho' I've agreed to go out and salute them in any case, and read this word or two.

Few of his auditors ever knew how he worried over these little speeches. He wrote them painstakingly, and tried to memorize them; but even in the brilliant Soldiers Field address, he had had to be prompted by a young medical student who sat behind him with the manuscript. Of the Memorial Day address of 1897, on Robert Gould Shaw, he wrote to his wife before the ordeal: "I wish it were better, less tired, less dull; but my day has gone by even in that late field." Yet he charmed his audience, and continued to do so for another score of years.

As he grew older, the tender elegiac note in these Cambridge addresses became more and more apparent. It gave great delicacy and beauty to his portraits of women friends,—Elizabeth Cary Agassiz, Sarah Helen Whitman, Josephine Shaw Lowell, and Ellen Hooper Gurney,—which he read on various occasions at Radcliffe. How graceful are the opening words of his sketch of Mrs. Agassiz:—

Woman is a closed book to men, and whenever a man says that he knows women well, you may be sure that he knows them very little. The only key to this closed book known to me is to love them — love them, not perhaps as wives or sweethearts, but as friends. It is an education and civilization

along delicate lines, and all education is dangerous because it opens the mind and the spirit to new ideas which may mislead.

A few sentences give a memorable picture of Mrs. Whitman:—

She disliked ugly or unfit objects of daily use, and put a graceful silver pitcher on the desk in Sanders Theatre, to replace an ugly, common water-jug. She was fond of jewels and fine book-binding and, in general, of beautifying everyday life. She has left behind her sundry portraits of men, women and children, which show sentiment and comprehension of her friends. These pictures, together with many landscapes and colored glass-work, she made at her studio, where she often invited her friends and strangers of note — for a cup of tea and a bit of bread; and we all flocked thither. We remember her tall, graceful figure, clad in a quaint fashion, and her friendly smile and greeting. . . . She was an intense woman, who gave her possessions and herself to others without stint — indeed, with boundless hospitality of soul; yet we felt a great reserve, and well knew that behind the door of her own room we could not venture. Of familiar friends who counted on her she had many, but whether she had intimates, I never knew.

And how Mrs. Gurney lives again in these brief lines:—

How is one to describe a rose, to recite its beauty, its nature, its charm and the memory which it leaves to those who have seen it? Mrs. Gurney — Ellen Hooper she was to us — was a beautiful flower and of such peculiar quality that she baffles description. From her childhood I knew her, — as a small girl at school, full of intelligence and mischief and waywardness, — as a maiden budding into womanhood, running

over with fun and bright thoughts, — as a grown woman intent on the ideas of the clever men and women whom she daily saw, full of interest for the new aspects of life, and full of fire for the cause of the Union in our great Civil War. . . . She loved books and sought the occupation and solace of them. Once, in talking with Mr. Emerson, who was the beloved apostle of our youth, and who had known her parents, he said: "Miss Hooper, reading is a matter of race with you." She replied: "Yes, I do read very fast." . . . She loved the sea and the skies, and delighted in walking and riding on horseback in the woods. I well remember her handsome vicious black mare, and once, when the mare was rebellious, said to her: "Ellen, some day that mare will kill you." She replied: "Henry, I don't mind being killed, but I do not wish to have my front teeth broken." She was a wonderful woman, gifted with the love of poetry, nature, books, talk, wit, humor, and, most of all, love of men and women. All was grist to her mill, and her mill ground exceeding fine. She could not express fully what she thought and felt, because she was running over with thought and feelings, and yet shy, but those which came from her were pure jewels. . . . Her lovely head and figure and voice, with its sweet, low tones and perfect enunciation, her beautiful hands and feet, her brilliant, kindly wit, her frank truthfulness, her exquisite ways and her charming manners all remain in the memories of her lovers.

It is no wonder that Rufus Choate's daughter — Mrs. Helen Choate Bell — wrote to Mr. Higginson: "If Sargent could paint with his brush portraits of the strength and delicacy which you paint with your pen — well! he would not be Sargent! You have made Ellen Gurney blossom in the garden of my memory, till she stands before me like a white hyacinth."

William James wrote: —

"As for your address, it was good in every sense of the word,

but more of the Radcliffe girls ought to have heard it. Your loyalty to old friends is magnificent, but after all one can't carry on any real feeling of the worthies of one generation into the next unless they have figured in countless memoirs, autobiographies, correspondences, etc., with sayings, anecdotes, etc., innumerable. Johnson is a live figure to us because Boswell reported him stenographically and so copiously. Your lachrymals, dear Henry, and your lips lie too close together. I don't think you spoke of Effie L.'s *voice* — to me that constituted perhaps her chief personal charm. So low and yet so vibrant. . . ."

Yet the sentimental side of Henry Higginson, true and deep as it was, was only one phase of a complex personality. As he faced, during the last decade of his life, the intricate problems involved in the expansion of Harvard University, he showed a singular capacity for looking forward and not back. He was resourceful in plans, tireless in curiosity and energy. He had the foresight and the hope of youth, as one knowing that the Alma Mater, at least, is immortally young, immortally exigent.

Of all the departments of the University, the Medical School was perhaps nearest his heart. His correspondence with President Lowell reveals him as the sustainer of a new professorship in the Medical School in 1909, providing \$5000 a year for five years, in order to secure a brilliant specialist. Five years later he is full of enthusiasm over a second new professorship in the School. It was a hard year with him financially, and there is something boyish in his excuses for giving more than he could now afford to give — particularly as he had just contributed \$25,000 toward the Freshman Dormitories. He writes to President Lowell: "You see \$5000 yearly for five years is not \$25,000. I ought not to draw out large sums from our business, but ought to spend my income. Why pile it up? . . . You really agree and live up to it, but are careful of me. Don't! Why not do as you'd be done by?

Who knows how much will be left presently? and meantime let us trust in the Lord."

It was typical of him that, when the Corporation was obliged, one year, to reduce the appropriation for the Jefferson Physical Laboratory, he should quietly send his personal check to Professor Trowbridge to make up the amount — under a pledge of secrecy. More than once a Harvard professor received a generous bank draft "for your own personal expenses or comforts. I hope you will accept it in the spirit in which it is offered, and believe that this gives me more pleasure than any other use I can make of the money." It was never possible to trace the giver, but "the long arm of coincidence" pointed significantly toward 191 Commonwealth Avenue.

Typical, likewise, is the story kindly written by Professor Taussig about the beginnings of the Graduate School of Business Administration: —

"In the spring of 1907 the project for the establishment of a business school had become ripe for action. It had been under consideration for some time, and had been the subject of repeated conferences between myself and President Eliot. The distinctive feature of the school, namely, that it should be a graduate department, on a par with the Law School and Medical School, had been approved by the Corporation, and the development of the project on this basis was settled. There remained the question of ways and means. The belief of those concerned was that the sum of \$25,000 a year for five years would suffice as a launching fund. Somewhat rashly, I undertook to see that such a sum would be provided, and was authorized by President Eliot to endeavor to secure it.

"Good progress was made in the first appeals to donors. More particularly, the General Education Board, attracted by a scheme for a novel and promising experiment in education, agreed to provide one half the sum needed. A considerable part of the remainder was pledged, when the panic of the

autumn of 1907 put a damper on all undertakings of the sort. It was not deemed wise to press appeals for money during the winter of 1907-08.

In the spring of 1908, however, it became necessary to determine whether the school should be established in the autumn of that year, as had been originally contemplated. The Corporation passed a vote to the effect that, if the project for a business school was to be carried out, it was desirable that the necessary funds should be provided forthwith. That vote was communicated to me.

"I recall vividly that the very morning on which the memorandum from the Corporation reached me by mail, a telephone call came from Lee, Higginson and Co., asking me to meet Major Higginson at some time on that day. An appointment was arranged for the afternoon at the familiar apartment at 191 Commonwealth Ave. On arrival I was shown at once to the modest room which Major Higginson kept for himself: almost bare, equipped with an iron bed and Jaeger blankets, a simple table and a chair or two. There Major Higginson went at once to the root of the matter and asked whether I had received the communication from the Corporation about the funds for the business school. Hardly waiting for a reply, he went on in some such words as these: 'Go to President Eliot to-morrow morning and tell him that a donor whose name you are not at liberty to state, but whose financial ability you can guarantee, has underwritten the entire sum still remaining to be raised on the estimated annual requirements for the business school.' And then he turned the conversation to other matters and talked about music, the University, the Union. Needless to say, a load was off my mind; especially as the spring was a busy one, and I was not at the moment in the mood for gathering pledges or able to spare the time. The Corporation acted upon the verbal assurance which I gave to President Eliot. Professor Gay was elected Dean of the School and it was launched on the career with which all Harvard men are familiar.

"In the autumn of 1908 I found myself able to take up once more the task of gathering pledges, and had the satisfaction of securing the full amount without resort to Major Higginson. None the less, his guarantee not only was an immense relief to myself, but made it possible to carry out the program as matured.

"Perhaps I should add that, at an earlier stage, in the spring of 1907, when Major Higginson knew that pledges for contributions were being asked, he remarked jocularly that he was much disposed to take a ticket himself, but already had a good many on hand for other voyages. The circumstance that he had already done so much for the University was an obvious reason why he should not be asked to join in this enterprise. His generous spirit impelled him to volunteer when something in the nature of an exigency arose."

Henry Higginson was too loyal an Emersonian not to remember the proverb quoted in the essay on "Compensation": "What will you have? quoth God; pay for it and take it." He received from his own Alma Mater and from a very large circle of college men throughout the country all the honor and affection of which a man could dream. He paid the price, not merely in money, — which he counted as nothing except as an opportunity of service, — but in time, energy, and travail of soul. "Himself he could not save." What he said once to the boys of Middlesex School about Dean Briggs reveals his own spirit: "His head, hand, heart are at your service for twenty-four hours for three hundred and sixty-five days in each year. If you go to him once, you will go again." He simply did not know how any servant of the College could keep back part of the price.

Over-work was the inevitable consequence.<sup>1</sup> The solicitude and admonition of his friends find constant expression in his correspondence. President Eliot writes him in 1906: —

<sup>1</sup> "Lack of self-control has marked my life. When the University or a cause or a person *needs* help, I wish to bear a hand. In consequence, I bite off more than I can chew (*my epitaph*) and half do things or load myself to a fretting point, often." H. L. H. to B. P., Jan. 14, 1912.

"Will you let me exhort you most urgently to take greater care of yourself, partly by avoiding all work and all pleasure which may involve exposure to cold, or to hot emotions. Warmth and serenity are desirable for men of our age. . . . I submit that good sense requires a more careful way of living than comes natural to you. . . . You will excuse me for writing in the above hortatory way. I feel strongly on the subject, because I have a high sense of the value of your life to the community. Naturally I have talked with some of your partners in business on the subject; but they invariably say that they do their best and yet find themselves very ineffectual."

The recipient of this letter knew, of course, that such advice was sound; and though it was temperamentally impossible that he should follow it, he preached to his friends those very counsels of perfection which he refused to apply to himself. A month after receiving President Eliot's letter, how deftly does Major Higginson turn the same argument against President Pritchett!

Charley Stone writes me that you are ill, and it is high time that you were. I thought you had more sense than I, and would know enough to stop somewhere within a reasonable point, and you have done nothing of the sort. . . . May I suggest that, if you were in my employ, I should come up and give you a spanking? . . . I was housed the Monday before Thanksgiving, and hope with good luck to get out in the first week of the year, and I have had a very sweet time — as I did two years ago; and have also known from the beginning to the end that I have brought it on myself just as much as if I had got drunk and had delirium tremens.

You are of far too much value to many people to be allowed the sort of freedom which you have taken with yourself. With an old corpse like me it is no great matter; but you are in the full vigor of your manhood, and you have a piece of work on hand of inestimable value to the best class of people in the

country, *i.e.*, the teachers. . . . If a man or a woman shows a capacity for doing anything, or a willingness to listen to the tales of others, he is sure to be crowded to death. . . .

I do not know what you could expect [he writes to Dean Briggs in 1908], except that some disease would catch you because you live so fast. A man cannot do everything, and you are trying to. Have you not reached the time in life when quality is of more value than quantity? That is, your existence and influence are worth more than your work — and no one would undervalue the latter.

Nor does he hesitate to exhort the Bishop of Massachusetts to amend his life: —

BOSTON, Jan. 17, 1919.

DEAR BISHOP: —

You are very good to everybody except yourself. Fred Shattuck and Frank Balch have told me for ten years that I could behave and flourish, or go it blind and pay the bill — and the same is true of William Lawrence, only more so. It would be better for the public, let alone your friends and lovers, if you would behave. I am much troubled at your grievous illness. Pray consider your ways, for nobody of my acquaintance keeps such a full head of steam as you do. You have all the feelings toward you which are possible and lots of sympathy, and get *Well Now*.

Yours affectionately,

H. L. HIGGINSON.

To complete this series of preachments, take another letter to Dean Briggs, upon his departure for Paris as Exchange Professor. Lovers of irony should remember that neither of these great servants of the University had in the preceding dozen years altered his ways in the slightest.

MASSACHUSETTS GENERAL HOSPITAL

*Feb. 20, 1919.*

MY DEAR DEAN:—

In the hurry of departure, that you should have written to me is a great proof of your kindness and friendship. I am delighted that you are going to France to represent the University and our country — and you will do both, and thereby teach Europe what we are. Of course you are a great loss here, both to the University and to Radcliffe. I can remember no fault of yours, except your desire to take on another piece of work and then another; and I often wish that, at your age, you would be content — for you must be sixty. When you return, cannot you moderate your desire for work? A great railroad man said to me once: "The head of a great railroad ought to have no work or anything to do except to sit at his desk and consider" — and it seems to me that you are in pretty much that position. Of course, the girls would mourn, and the University might suffer; but also, you have a wife and children. I have often thought how decent men make a certain oath in church with regard to a woman when they "take up" together and then how the man does not get drunk, or does not steal, but he does overwork and keep himself away from his family. As a matter of morals, is it much worse to drink too much wine or to do too much work? I do not know, but I do know this: that Frank Balch, who is a wise, kind adviser, who has taken care of me since he left College, said to me one day: "If you cannot moderate your gait, you will catch it." — "Well," said I, "Frank, how?" — Said he: "That I cannot tell you, but you will catch it." On the 6th of March, 1918, the devil knocked at my door, and he has sat in my lap ever since. I have wasted a year or more in bed, wasted lots of money, worried my wife and friends, and am less wise than I was before. Fred Shattuck has told me the same as Frank Balch, and said to me: "Only your power of sleep, which is enormous, has saved you from going to the devil long ago." But I do not do as much work as

you do, and could not. Possibly when you come back, you may be more sober, and wiser. Then we will put you on a pedestal, where you belong. . . .

Yet if the price paid by Henry Higginson for personal devotion to his Alma Mater was great, the reward was great also. He renewed his vitality by intimate contact with the spirit of youth. Thousands of Harvard men remember him, not so much as the donor of Soldiers Field and the Union, the member of the Corporation, the president of the Harvard Club and of the Alumni Association, the guest of the Associated Harvard Clubs at great gatherings in Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Cleveland, and Cincinnati, but as the erect, alert, quick-eyed, pleasant-voiced old man, who talked to them when they were Freshmen, at the first mass-meeting of the year. He said wise things, of course, — for he could not help being pungent, humorous, patriotic, — but precisely what he said made little difference. Perhaps the phrase by which recent undergraduates best remember him was uttered at the mass-meeting in the Union in April, 1914, when there was wild excitement about enlisting for an invasion of Mexico. "Keep your shirts on," was the terse command of Major Higginson — and he was obeyed. He stood there as an embodiment of the ancient virtues, a scarred veteran of the Civil War — like one of those "men of Marathon" in the age of Aristophanes. It was good to look at him; good to know that such men were still alive. And the last letters to be quoted in this chapter shall be the notes to Dean Briggs about those meetings for Freshmen at the opening of the college year.

*September 6, 1912.*

MY DEAR DEAN:—

I have your letter of September 3d. Who can resist your letters? Of course I shall come out if it will do you or the College any good. But it constantly comes up to me what my wisest friend said to me twenty years ago: "You are all right,

and what you said was well enough" (it was the speech about Soldiers Field), "but now do not get into the habit of orating. It is a very bad habit." I can go up and sit on that platform and smile; but when you, Charles Eliot and Lawrence Lowell talk, I am not wanted. However, there are very few things you can ask of me that I shall not do, and I shall go out.

*September 27, 1912.*

MY DEAR DEAN:—

Thank you for your letter of September 26th. I enjoyed the evening at Cambridge very much. Lawrence always talks very well, but, as you say, he never talked better than he did the other night. It is the best audience a man can have, excepting always that it is so deadly still while a man is speaking, and no expressions during the speech. But even that is probably best. As for Mr. Eliot, he will remain unique, and his advice is very sweet and good, and his way of putting the case convincing. He never speaks when I do not enjoy it very much. Dean Yeomans impressed me very favorably. He has a fine, strong face, and his words were the same — and that was a fine boy who spoke, too. As for my own part, I always think that I can state my case well, and always find that I do state it ill. As my wife said long ago, every thing that I say or write is spasmodic and lacks connection. What one's personality is to others, no man can judge, and I always am glad to be welcomed. But, thinking over my words, I saw that they were not to the point, and that the ideas did not move together. Earnestness, hard work and thinking of others is the whole story; but I do feel sure that we are in troubled times and can only get out of them by a joint and also individual effort; and no man or woman can begin too soon.

*July 21, 1916.*

DEAR DEAN:—

I have been away, so your letter has been neglected. I shall hope to be with you to speak to the Freshmen if it does them any good, but I can see very little reason in it.

*October 9, 1917.*

DEAR DEAN:—

I have your letter.

It seems to me next Monday would be a good time. Only I wish to think over what to say — what topics to take up. One gets so tired of one's own thoughts that it is not easy to think that other people are not equally tired. Place? Time? How long a talk? Can I sit down? Gossip? Chat as with you?

SUNSET HILL, MANCHESTER BY THE SEA

*August 11, 1918.*

DEAR DEAN:—

Will you tell me when and where the reception of the Freshmen of this year will be held? I always care to be present and see the lads — which does *not* mean that I am to talk to them.

If you are as tired of my words as I am — that part will be left out. But I like well to hear you and the President speak to them.

Forgive the pencil, but I am laid up in bed.

WESTPORT, ESSEX COUNTY, NEW YORK

*Sept. 20 [1919].*

MY DEAR DEAN:—

Your bidding to the Freshmen meeting has just come — by wire.

I am here on a vacation and Judge Cabot is here also. I will go down, if you like and think it worth while (for my words are worn out and few) and *if I can*. . . .

I can leave here at noon and arrive in Boston (North Station) at about 8 — and go to Cambridge. If I could turn up at 8.30 or so, would it do?

I *can* go the night before, but thus lose a day here.

Remember that my services to Harvard to-day are very few and so don't scruple to answer frankly. At this time *any* service which anybody can yield is a debt of moment — which must be paid. You have time enough to write me at the above address — or you can telegraph or telephone.

Time of meeting — place of meeting — need of me. You could not count on me before 8.30 P.M.

Play fair — remembering that I shall speak very few times, for my age is — long.

That speech of September 23, 1919, was his last. His age was "long" — but his memory among Harvard men will be longer.

## CHAPTER XII

### COMRADE AND CITIZEN

The nobler a soul, the more objects of compassion it hath. — FRANCIS BACON.

Don't grow rich; if you once begin you will find it much more difficult to be a useful citizen. Don't seek office; but don't "disremember" that the useful citizen holds his time, his trouble, his money, and his life always ready at the hint of his country. The useful citizen is a mighty unpretending hero, but we are not going to have a country very long unless such heroism is developed. — CHARLES R. LOWELL to H. L. H., September 10, 1864.

I was struck by Henry Higginson's high level of mental tension, so to call it, which made him talk incessantly and passionately about one subject after another, never running dry, and reminding me more of myself when I was twenty years old. It is n't so much a man's eminence of elementary faculties that pulls him through. They may be rare, and he do nothing. It is the steam-pressure to the square inch behind that moves the machine. The amount of that is what makes the great difference between us. *Henry has it high.* — WILLIAM JAMES, in September, 1906. *Letters*, vol. II, p. 261.

THAT high steam-pressure to the square inch, which so impressed William James when Henry Higginson was seventy-two, was due in part to an athletic body. The Higginsons were a tough, wiry, long-lived race. Unlike his mother, he did not "die from the over-strain." He was built too powerfully for that. The bullet-wound received at Aldie troubled him intermittently for half a century, and, as some of his letters printed in the preceding chapter confess, he did not always obey his doctor's warnings. But in spite of some physical sufferings incident to old age, and in spite of burdens that would have crushed a less robust frame, he lived to be nearly eighty-five. The Sargent portrait shows him at seventy, but the painter noted a marked increase of vigor on the part of his sitter during the subsequent decade.

Henry Higginson was one of those "middle-sized" men

whom Oliver Cromwell loved to pick for "Ironsides" material. He was five feet eight in height, and never varied more than a few pounds from 170 in weight. He had long arms, powerful legs, and a notably deep chest. He sat a horse well, and was fond of driving. Bostonians who recall the now remote "Silas Lapham" period may remember how Henry Higginson used to race horses with Greely Curtis and John Shepard on the old "Mill-Dam." His son, Captain A. Henry Higginson, notes:—

"I remember very clearly my great delight when he came to me one day and told me that he had made up his mind to go in for breeding hackneys, and that he was going to build a new stable and import a lot of animals from England. At that time I was far more interested in yachting than in horse-breeding, but the thought that we were going to be together a lot in the summer pleased me greatly. This was in 1891, and he spent nearly all the summer at home working over his new stable. He had at that time a very able man called Mitchell, whom he sent to England with orders to buy the best there was to be found; and about September they arrived. He was as excited as a boy over them, and I can well remember the night they came down by special train from Boston and were unloaded at Manchester. Among the lot was a stallion called Enthorpe Performer, one of the most noted hackneys that ever came to this country, and a winner both in New York and at other shows.

"Everything looked most promising, and I was very much disappointed to find, when I came back the next spring (I spent the winter of 1892 in the West), that it was all given up. I don't know just what went wrong, but I do know that he never said much about it, and I know that he himself was very much disappointed at having to give it up. Father was a sportsman at heart — but he was always too busy to indulge himself that way in his early years, and I think that in later life, when he had the time to do it, he had lost to a great degree

the desire. But horses always had a very strong fascination for him, and he always sympathized very strongly with me in my racing and hunting, and did everything to make it easy for me to have that sport that he himself had never had but always wanted. . . .

"About 1900 I began to take an active interest in horses, and he was always ready to help me in any way and every way in connection with them. I remember one day that my trainer said to me, 'Mr. Higginson, your father was at the track yesterday to see General Douglas run.' I had not been able to be there myself, but father, without saying anything to me about it, had slipped over to New York and had gone down to the race-track to see my horse run. I waited to see if he would refer to the matter, but he didn't, and so finally one day I said to him, 'Well, sir, you saw General Douglas run the other day and you never told me anything about it. Why didn't you?'—'Well,' he said, 'I don't exactly know why I did n't, but we 'll go down together next time.' I knew why, knew as well as if he'd told me. It was a funny shyness that he had,—he hated to show his feelings,—and I think he thought that I'd have made fun of him. But needless to say, after that we went many, many times together and had a lot of fun out of it.

"As my stable grew in numbers and in quality, he took more and more interest in it, and I don't believe that there were many races that I rode in myself that my father (and my mother too) were n't there, although I knew it used to make my mother rather nervous. In 1911 and 1912 I was the presiding steward at the Country Club races in Brookline, and at that time I had it in my power to take him up in the judges' stand, where he could see the races very well. At first, when I asked him to go up with me, he was very diffident about going; but after a bit he came up, and how he did enjoy himself! He was very a good judge of horses, and he used to like to stand in the judges' box and pick out horses as they

went by for their warming-up gallops. I remember one day in 1911, he was standing there with me before a race, and a very handsome gray horse galloped by. ‘What is that horse?’ said father; ‘he looks like a good one.’ I replied that he was, and that he had won the Grand National Steeplechase in New York a few weeks before. ‘Why don’t you buy him?’ said he; and when I explained that he was a very expensive horse, he thought a moment and then said to me: ‘Let’s go and look at him, I’d like to see him near to.’ Unsuspecting, I went down to the paddock with him and we saw the horse being saddled for his race. ‘Who owns him?’ said father. ‘Why,’ I said, ‘he is owned by Tompkins, who trains for me.’ — ‘Ask him to come out here a minute; I want to meet him,’ he said; and I did so. ‘Mr. Tompkins,’ said my father, ‘I want that horse of yours for Alex, and I want him now. What’s his price?’ Tompkins told him. ‘All right,’ said father, ‘he runs in our name and interest then’; and so he did. And it all happened so quickly that I had n’t time even to draw a long breath, and he would hardly let me thank him, though you may be sure I tried very hard to do so. If that horse had won that day, the story would have been complete; but luck was against us and he was beaten by a nose, though he won many a good race for me after that.

“I only tell this story to illustrate his great generosity toward me, which was ever present through our relations with each other. I don’t think any man could have had a better father, and I know that no man ever had a more generous or thoughtful one.”

Major Higginson cared nothing for sailing, fishing, shooting, or the life of the woods. He was an expert axeman, however, and both at Sunset Hill and on his farm at Lake Champlain, he could hold his own with Irish and Canadian wood-choppers. He used to keep in condition, too, by driving down from Manchester, in the summer mornings, to the Beverly Farms

or Montserrat station, before boarding the train for Boston. When living in town, he liked to walk from Commonwealth Avenue to State Street. He disliked motor-cars, fought against them for years, and then one day, happening to ride in a big car that caught his fancy, he proceeded to buy two of them! But he was happier on foot. Thousands of his fellow citizens recognized that straight-shouldered, brisk, friendly-looking personage. Unlike his uncle, Henry Lee, he was not modish in dress. Yet he had his preferences: he was faithful through life to his youthful fondness for fine shirts from London and Paris and for red-silk handkerchiefs, and his straw hats ("Such a hat," notes his son, "as New Yorkers call a 'Boston' straw hat") were invariably purchased on Elm Street, off Hanover.

He was a familiar figure at football and baseball games on Soldiers Field, and liked the company of young athletes. But his vacations, whether at Manchester or Lake Champlain or in Europe, were usually very brief, and were haunted by telegrams and long-distance telephone calls. His physical salvation lay in his abstemious habits as to food, his abstinence from stimulants, and his ability to sleep. Sometimes he seemed to realize that he was growing old without ever having learned to take a real holiday. He wrote to Miss Grace Minns from Munich in 1911:—

. . . The stay in London was too hard, for the demands of work and of society, *i.e.*, seeing friends, tired me, and the British Museum, with its chill, laid me up. I am all right again, enjoyed Paris with its gallery and sights,—and also much business,—and then went to Geneva. Then for the first time I took in that I had missed *the* object of my trip — rest and nothing to do in good air. And now I wish I had stayed there and loafed. Perhaps I shall get back for a few days. The air was wonderful and the scenery, the gentle smiling landscape, most refreshing. You must have noticed that I always reach my point too late. Will it be so all my life? . . .

That Henry Higginson's home life was exceptionally happy need not be stated here. His tastes were simple, and he could never quite forgive an elderly kinsman, who once accused him of "liking to flaunt his wealth in the face of the public." Nothing could have been further from the truth. His own room was Spartan. He bought some good pictures, it is true: a Sir Joshua Reynolds, a Constable, a Turner, a Bonifazio, some Millet pastels, eight Corots, and many works by Hunt, Fuller, and La Farge. Henry Adams, in Paris, bargained with Rodin for some bronzes for Mr. Higginson, and they were ultimately delivered, after a contest in financial shrewdness between the French peasant and the Quincy Yankee which is most amusingly set forth in Henry Adams's letters. The Yankee won! Mr. Higginson bought Chinese and Japanese bronzes, but he never became a "collector." In the good old New England fashion, he bought books freely, but cared little for bindings and "editions." His eyes continued to trouble him in the evenings, but this disability brought about the pleasant habit of listening while his wife read aloud. Mrs. Higginson notes:—

" . . . He and Charley Lowell and Stephen Perkins were fond of reading poetry and prose. I remember, when Henry was quite a young man, he lent me his copy of Clough's 'Bothie' and a book called 'Oakfield,' written by one of the Arnolds, which I am just re-reading now for the sake of 'Auld Lang Syne.' I know that he read Goethe and Shakespeare a great deal in his youth. As his eyes were weak and he could not read in the evening, he was in the habit of playing solitaire, and I always read aloud to him. He liked to hear Mill's and Bagehot's Essays, but especially Bagehot's. He did not care very much for Macaulay. When I read to him in the evening it was in the books that were coming out, such as Morley's 'Recollections,' various 'Lives of Lincoln,' the series of 'English Men of Letters,' as they came out, and the 'American Statesmen' series. At one time I used to read German

to him, but of late years he had forgotten his German somewhat, and could not follow easily enough for me to continue. The last thing we read was Shakespeare's 'Much Ado About Nothing,' which he enjoyed very much indeed. . . ."

He wrote me from Manchester in June, 1919:—

To go back to my young days, I am reading "Faust" again, and like it. By the way, if men and women were willing to tell their thoughts and feelings freely, when on a stage, should we not have more eloquence, or at any rate more feeling, from man to man? We Yankees dislike to tell the story as we feel it, and only break out when the house begins to burn. Sometimes I wish to say: "Hang this self-control!"

There speaks the man who in his India Wharf epoch used to save one hour a day to read Jean Paul Richter with Charles Lowell!

"Music," writes Mrs. Higginson, "continued to be what it had always been from his youth up — a passion. Although not at all an accomplished performer, he liked to sit down at the piano and play snatches of songs, — often his own compositions, — of symphonies, or any favorite pieces. It was a pleasure to hear him. He had a very delightful touch."

I, too, wished to write music [he wrote me in 1909], studied two or three years in earnest and very hard, and wrote a few songs good enough for the fire in the grate. Disappointed! yes, but what of it? I *could* saw wood, and so have sawed. There are wood-sawers needed and they are paid well — in cash, though not in joy, unless the woodpile can light a good fire and heat mankind.

"You will have noticed in his very early diary," says Mrs. Higginson, "that his musical taste was already inclined towards Beethoven. If you were to ask me what his tastes

were within my recollection, I should say Beethoven, Schumann, Schubert, Mozart, Haydn, Bach, Brahms — especially Bach and Beethoven. He did not have much sympathy with some of the later composers, even the distinguished ones, such as Wagner, Strauss, Tschaikowski, although he liked some of César Franck's compositions." In his younger days he had sometimes grown impatient with the conservative tastes of John Sullivan Dwight, who did so much to diffuse a love of music in Boston; but now that he himself had grown old in turn, he could use Dwight's own words: "We candidly confess that what now challenges the world as new in music fails to stir us to the same depths of soul and feeling that the old masters did, and doubtless always will. Startling as the new composers are, and novel, curious, brilliant, beautiful at times, they do not bring us nearer heaven."<sup>1</sup>

It is the old story of "Milestones": each generation rebels, conforms, and then finds itself out of touch with the new. Of the many expressions of personal musical taste in Mr. Higginson's correspondence, nothing is more characteristic than these words to Mrs. George D. Howe about Beethoven's Third Symphony:—

As to the "Eroica," I had meant to tell you how I felt about it, but it opens the flood-gates, and I can't. The wail of grief, and then the sympathy which should comfort the sufferer. The wonderful funeral dirge, so solemn, so full, so deep, so splendid, and always with courage and comfort. The delightful march home from the grave in the *scherzo* — the wild Hungarian, almost gypsy in tone — and then the climax of the melody, where the gates of Heaven open, and we see the angels singing and reaching their hands to us with perfect welcome. No words are of any avail, and never does that passage of entire relief and joy come to me without tears — and I wait for it through life, and hear it, and wonder.

<sup>1</sup> Dwight's valedictory in the last number of his *Journal of Music*, Sept., 1881.

That Henry Higginson's nature was deeply and sincerely religious, all of his friends were aware. He disliked forms and creeds and controversies. In 1865, while alone in Georgia, he wrote to his wife that she and her girl friends seemed in danger of "sinking into religious discussion."

If by creed [he goes on] is meant form of religion or theology, *i.e.*, Catholicism, Protestantism,—divided into Calvinism, Lutheranism, Presbyterianism, Episcopacy, Trinitarianism, Unitarianism, etc., etc.,—they have slight meaning for me and no preference in my eyes farther than this: that the most liberal, wide and charitable of them is the best. . . . As to Trinity or Unity, I cannot feel the most remote interest in the question. The Unitarian church is, I believe, more tolerant than the others, and therefore wins in my eyes; that is all.

A message to his son, written in 1892, gives the root of the matter as it lay in his mind: "He can think as he pleases about religion, *but he has got to live with other folks, and he cannot get rid of God.* The world and we all are made so, and the chap who sees it early and lives accordingly, is best off."

In a letter to Mrs. Louis Agassiz, in 1899, he speaks of himself "as one naturally hating conventions and the received rules of life and even of morality and often of conduct. Yet I know by experience the great value of these things and am aware of the folly of running a-tilt at windmills. I believe in many tenets of socialism, else Christianity would be false and the religion of humanity would die."

He was far from a regular church-goer, although at various times he attended Appleton Chapel, and had for a while a pew in Dr. Crothers's church in Cambridge. In an address to students in the Union in 1907, he confessed his own fondness for keeping outdoors on Sundays, but declared: "Church-going is a good habit; and so take it up and keep it up, for an hour in church quiets and cools us, makes us kind and thoughtful."

He wrote his friend Dr. George A. Gordon in 1911: "I rarely go to church, but am not an entire heathen, and I do know a man when I see one — as I did this afternoon." Dr. Gordon, in reply, gave him glorious absolution for his non-attendance: "I give you a free pass to the highest realms of light, if you do not go to church. Good as it is, there is something infinitely better than church-going; you have chosen the better part."

His old New England training, however, inclined him to listen to his wife's reading of a sermon on Sundays, even if he had spent most of the day in chopping trees. He liked particularly something by his classmate "Phil Brooks," or one of Archbishop Temple's Rugby sermons. Like most connoisseurs of good conversation, he enjoyed the society of ministers, — provided he could select the minister, — and his letters to clerical friends are invariably delightful.<sup>1</sup> Here is one written in 1912 to Bishop Brent, who had that morning exalted "inspirational idealism" above "practical idealism." Mr. Higginson did not quite agree.

BOSTON, Feb. 25, 1912.

DEAR BISHOP BRENT: —

This afternoon we have buried an old friend and comrade of the war, Edward Hall, and the service increases the comfort of the day which you began so well and warmly this morning. Of course your words were true and vital, and they go deep. It seems to me that we have not time or strength for the needed work, and for us old folks time is short, and strength less.

But to my question: Have you any special quest on hand? Once you came to me on some mutual matter, — for all your matters are mutual, — and I was glad to see you. Never since then have you been to my shop. If you have a wish which is within my reach, pray tell me. That is my errand. After all, we are trying to play the same game, or at least I hope so.

<sup>1</sup> His letter to Phillips Brooks, urging him to remain at Trinity Church rather than become the college preacher at Harvard, is quoted in Dr. A. V. G. Allen's *Life of Phillips Brooks*, and in Mr. Howe's *A Great Private Citizen*, reprinted from the *Atlantic Monthly*, March, 1920.

Now another matter: "Practical idealism is a failure." Is it? Is it not the follower of "inspirational idealism," the other hand, the other half? Consider slavery. Phillips, Garrison, Channing, and Wentworth Higginson talked and talked about slavery, its sin, etc. Olmsted showed its practical — that is, economic weakness — failure. Lincoln and the quiet men of the countryside and of the factories and of the counting-room showed their "practical idealism" by wrestling against it at any cost, and paid the bill. Is not the same true in many ways?

Our nation needs education and civilization, thought of others,—as to their condition, hopes, aims, refreshment, amusement, religion,—active and unceasing thought of and work for others. Plenty of people think so and seek all these things. Is not this "practical idealism"?

In it lies the only solution of life, the only means of allaying the fever of the times; and my mates of sixty years ago who are lying in Virginia thought so sixty years ago, and their "relic" thinks so to-day. We cannot smash; God does not wish it, for it upsets his plan for the world, so it seems to me, and, therefore, we must go on in better fashion. Is this childish reasoning? Never mind — we always feel better when we are trying, hoping, wrestling and using practical idealism, don't we?

We old soldiers are sure that we might well have won at Antietam, and taken Lee's Army, body and breeches, and again at Chancellorsville, and again at Gettysburg; but we did not, and two of us old files yesterday were saying to each other that our only explanation was that God thought we had not paid the full price for our sin, and so was not willing to let us succeed. I believe it fully.

Do you know that in my youth (when I was twenty years old) our minister, Ephraim Peabody, prayed aloud in church for the slave in chains who was in our Court House and was taken away to slavery again, — and he was spanked for his rash words by a dear old citizen, an uncle of mine, — spanked

between churches,— and he stopped talking. Times are changed when you can venture on such talk in *the* conservative church of the town. Phil Brooks, my old classmate and schoolmate, did not mind any “old uncle”; he was reporting the laws of the Lord. They suited him and us. Times are better, and Bishop Brent talks as he and we like.

All we men of the world can do is to indulge in practical idealism, and try to make it answer, and remember that it is according to the truth, which must prevail; otherwise, life is a failure — almost a farce.

I liked much what you said about the past being a philosopher and to be forgotten, except as it can teach us something. To me the past has little interesting; what we have done is over, and it is only the future which is really interesting. I am an old man, and regret my age only because so much work remains to be done, and I cannot do my share. . . . Never mind — when a man talks as you do, a real man must once more get into the fight and do his best. All of which is useless to you. What do you want that an old man can do for you? Do not think of answering my letter except to tell me your wishes.

Yours truly,

HENRY L. HIGGINSON.

It has recently become the fashion to place the “mission” of the theatre alongside of the mission of the church. Major Higginson was not modern enough for this, but he was a life-long theatre-goer, a keen critic of the stage, and a friend of many actors. Passages from his early diaries about French and German players have already been quoted. He always thought the Paris stage the best in the world: “it is the French conscience which teaches honest, careful work.” He wrote in 1897: “I think Got the best French actor within my ken — better than Coquelin, or even Regnier or Samson. Madame Arnould-Plessy was *great*, — ugly, charming, almost malign, — but great.” He took a strong dislike to Mounet-Sully’s

Hamlet: "It is brutal and horrid. The French may like it, but it is absolutely out of character. He wiggles over the stage on his stomach. It is burlesque."

He praised Mrs. Fiske in "Tess," but thought the play "coarse and wicked to a wonderful degree." Barrie's "Little Minister" delighted him: "Miss Adams plays her part with zest and grace. She uses her face too much — breaks it into fifty pieces and is quite absurd sometimes — but she is good."

Among the players on the Higginsons' long list of personal friends were Miss Marlowe, the Kendals, the Forbes-Robertsons, and Madame Duse. The Higginsons thought that the last-named artist was being unfairly treated by her London agents, and asked Henry James to intercede. He replied: —

LUCERNE, May 10th, 1893.

MY DEAR HENRY: —

It is a blessing to hear from you, and a very great pleasure; all the more in such a characteristic exhibition of your kindness. I gather, though you don't definitely say so, that you have given Madame Duse some note or word to me — which (if I reach London before she quits it, as I hope to do) will serve as my warrant for personally approaching her. Otherwise I shall be embarrassed. Her artistic fame long since reached me — and I have greatly yearned to see her; she is moreover a very good friend of a Roman friend of mine. *But*, I confess I am a little bewildered by this question of an active interest in her economical situation. I am the vaguest and feeblest of economists and men-of-business myself — don't even understand my own little sixpenny affairs — and go through life, I suspect, without having the intelligence to discover it — defrauded at every turn of *my* sixpences. Therefore I should be a broken reed for this more grandly victimized lady. But to any stray hint I *can* give her she shall be infinitely welcome. The gentleman you mention to me who is Coutts's partner will

probably have put his hand on the right man to advise and protect her. Exactly the right man *does* exist in London in the person of George Lewis — the legal providence of the cheated — of the defenceless actress, etc. If she consents I will gladly place her in relation with him. Unfortunately I fear I shall lose a part of her short visit to London — though I hope I shall not lose the whole. I am spending three months abroad and have lately come to this place to join my brother William and his wife, who have come up from Italy after their Florentine winter. . . . I will write to you of any happy contact I may have achieved with Madame Duse — whom one of my very first cares will be to go and listen to. I wish you had told me more about yourself. But I know that your "self" is simply your perpetual service to others. . . .

A second letter from Henry James follows:—

2 WELLINGTON CRESCENT, RAMSGATE  
July 14th, 1893.

MY DEAR HENRY:—

Your second good letter about Madame Duse made me doubly regret that it was foredoomed I should not see her. Much machinery, in London, was set in motion to that end: I repeated my visits to her hotel; little Helen D——, who seemed practically to be "running" her (in what pie has the great American girl *not* her finger?), exerted herself laudably, etc.; but the lady remained inaccessible, unattainable. Then I was obliged to leave town before the end of her engagement (flying from the storm and stress of the London July), and everything ended in smoke. I saw her in everything she played except "Cleopatra" (which she gave but once or twice — London would n't have it at any price), but only from the stalls. She is exquisite, and exquisitely interesting, so everyone thought. Her success with the press, critics, etc., was unqualified (save by the one case of "Cleopatra"); but her houses were prob-

ably not what they were in America. This was probably partly because her prices were higher than London ever pays for anyone *it has never heard of before* (she came here unknown), and partly on acct. of the immense *concurrence* of London evening engagements at the height of the season; the concurrence too of the Comédie Française (which has been here *au complet*), the extreme fashionability of the opera, etc., at only the same price. Whenever I saw her, however, the house was excellent.

But, alas, so far from being able to "advise" her, I could n't even approach her. My own satisfaction apart, indeed, that probably little mattered, for my advice would not have been much worth. I talked of her situation (very discreetly) to one or two sage theatrical people; and they declared that she is only in a situation which *every* actress or artist is condemned to who has n't a natural (or artificial) caretaker on her own side; some husband, father, brother, friend or relation, domestic appendage, in short, acting naturally in her interest and with whom her managers have to reckon. It must be a *personal* tie; from the moment it is only a business one, this individual (in 19 cases out of 20) only cheats her too. Most actresses *have* such an appendage, and the misfortune of poor Madame Duse appears to be her strange and pathetic isolation; as pathetic as her unspeakably touching art. Only little Helen D—— "on her side"! Is it not also true that she has her own impracticabilities — through an ignorance extreme in some directions? Peace at any rate be to her memory! She is still young, after all, and there is time for her yet to win her battle! I have a hope that I shall still see her in Venice. Mrs. Gilder wrote me about her too, and I have had to confess my failure also to her. I have surrendered my London habitation to my brother William and his wife for a few weeks and, on this somewhat sordid shore, am far from the madding crowd. You probably are tasting of more refined refreshment at some balmy Beverly. At least I hope

you are; and particularly Mrs. Ida. Please give her my friendliest greeting.

Yours most truly

HENRY JAMES.

Although Major Higginson was nothing of a "clubman," in the newspaper sense of that word, he was a member of many of those pleasant dining-clubs which link Boston so agreeably to the English eighteenth century. Samuel Johnson himself had no greater happiness than Henry Higginson in the company of his friends; and there is a fine Johnsonian flavor in this note from the Major, — dated from his New York club, the Knickerbocker, — about late hours: "When I am in Boston, I want to go to bed at ten o'clock; but when I am in New York, I don't care *when* I go to bed." Is it not like Johnson's "joyous contempt of sleep" on the night when he went upon "a frisk" with Beauclerk and Langton?

And even in Boston, the Wintersnight Club, the Wednesday Evening Club, the Tavern, and "The Club," strained his ten-o'clock rule far beyond the breaking-point. He was elected to the Saturday Club in 1893, but its monthly luncheons, shifted to the hour of one-thirty instead of the original dining hour at three o'clock,<sup>1</sup> came at a time when Mr. Higginson was anxious to close his desk at State Street, and get home — for Saturday was the only day of the business week when lunching at home was possible. Nevertheless he came to the Saturday Club frequently. The table, in his day, had grown too large for much general conversation, and sometimes he has been known to declare that the Saturday Club was dull. That depended, however, upon one's luck in being seated next to good tête-à-tête talkers, and few men who ever sat by Major Higginson thought the club a dull affair. Many of his intimates upon the Corporation and Board of Overseers were members. President Eliot sat at the head of the table. James

<sup>1</sup> Edward W. Emerson, *Early Years of the Saturday Club* (Boston, 1918), p. 22.

Russell Lowell once set a bad example to the club by utilizing the luncheon for attending to the business of Harvard College: "With me it was a business meeting. I sat between Hoar and Brimmer, that I might talk over college matters."<sup>1</sup> Henry Higginson was occasionally guilty of similar transgressions; but even then he talked about Harvard more rascily than most men talk about anything. He was proud of his membership in the famous club, and was highly concerned, in 1917, — as has been mentioned in an earlier chapter, — that it should set a good example in war-time by abstaining from wine and tobacco. The wine was cheerfully given up, for the first time since 1857; but skilful parliamentary practice succeeded in amending Major Higginson's motion so as to salvage the cigars.

For thirty-five years Major Higginson was a member of the Tavern Club, and served as its President from 1899 to his death — his friends Howells, Henry Lee, and Norton having preceded him in that office. His sympathy with younger men, his natural friendliness, and his usually quick discernment of character enabled him to enter easily and joyfully into the comradeship of the club. There were times of physical weariness, it is true, when his tendency to self-depreciation made him feel out of touch. "I went for a while to the Tavern Club," he wrote in 1895, "and do not wish to go again. I'm too old and stupid." He was sixty-one, and it was four years later that he began his twenty years term as President. His personal distinction, his simplicity of manner and fidelity to noble standards in the arts, were known to his fellow Taverners, and instantly recognized by the club's guests from other American cities and from Europe. He worried a great deal about his speeches, as always; but it was quite needless. There are some men who can violate every recognized rule of after-dinner oratory, and every rhetorical law of "unity, mass and coherence," and nevertheless make an admirable impres-

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in *Early Years of the Saturday Club*, p. 75.

sion; and few persons who watched Major Higginson preside at a Tavern Club dinner wished him to be other than he was: picturesque, ejaculatory, intimate, illogical, noble, whimsical, reckless — and delightful.

"His nature was without disguises," the club recorded after his death. "He endeared himself to us by his soldier-like bluntness and directness of speech, by his disregard of conventional estimates of men, by his amazing simplicities. A man of the world, in the best sense, he was nevertheless wholly without sophistication. His love of beauty was unaffected. He had no pretences. He never betrayed bitterness, except toward hypocrisy and cowardice. He had known pain and sorrow, but he kept unspoiled, to the age of eighty-five, a zest for life, the heart of youth and the gift for friendship."

There is good reason for thinking, however, that Major Higginson was really more at his ease at the small dinners of "The Club," on the first Friday of the month, than he was at the Saturday Club luncheons or in the high-backed President's chair at the Tavern. "'The Club,'" he wrote in 1902, "'is far and away the most agreeable and interesting club here, like the old Saturday Club in its great days and much beyond it at present. The talk is often brilliant — nothing which is not discussed.'"<sup>1</sup> Readers of William James's "Letters" will remember his interest in this "Friday" Club. Henry James was also a member, as were Howells, Henry Adams, Alexander Agassiz, James M. Crafts, John Fiske, John C. Gray, Francis

<sup>1</sup> ". . . I think you will agree with me that one hears the best talk in the town at our little club. Certainly one hears the freest interchange of thought, for the Saturday Club is clever enough, but men do not say all that they wish to, and they do hesitate to express themselves with absolute freedom. In the old days [of the "Friday" Club] it used to be great fun to hear William James and Wendell Holmes (the Judge) spar, or at any rate excite each other to all sorts of ideas and expressions, and John Fiske (though rarely present) was illuminating, while John Homans you remember. John Ropes, too, never hesitated to attack or defend anything which came up, and he was as reckless as he was courageous, and no humbug ever found place with him. . . ." — H. L. H. to James Ford Rhodes, Dec. 27, 1906.

Parkman, Arthur G. Sedgwick, and John C. Ropes. Mr. Higginson outlived these companions. Among the more constant attendants in his later years were his friends Dr. William Sturgis Bigelow, George A. P. Duncan (now the Earl of Camperdown), John T. Morse, Jr., Thomas Sergeant Perry, Raphael Pumpelly, James Ford Rhodes, Moorfield Storey, Dr. H. P. Walcott, and a few younger men. There were rarely more than six or eight present, and "general talk" was the rule. Henry Higginson had his favorite seat, on the left of John T. Morse, Jr., — who sat at the head of the table, — and opposite James Ford Rhodes. In the years when Mr. Rhodes was writing his Civil-War volumes, and John C. Ropes was living, the Club talk was rather likely to touch upon military history. But with John Fiske or William James or Judge Holmes or Raphael Pumpelly present, the topic might be anything conceivable. For twenty-five years William James's letters to Henry Higginson are full of references to "The Club":—

*October 13, 1893.* I am hungrily waiting for the October Friday dinner!

*January 1, 1901.* [From Rome] If you go to the Friday Dining Club, pray give my love to all those men of genius, wit and character. I should like to hear them talk!

*February 8, 1903.* You left too early Friday eve.

*April 6, 1908.* It was a real grief to me to have to cut last Friday's dinner, but I had no choice.

*January 4, 1909.* The dinner was a disappointment Friday night; the conversation kept steadily on too trivial a key; if you had been there, it would have maintained a somewhat more serious level. I missed you greatly.

Some dinners, of course, were bound to be less sparkling than others. Even John Fiske sometimes remained silent,

hour after hour, and William James himself has been known more than once to sit taciturn and abstracted throughout a Friday dinner, and then to talk like the most voluble and wonderful of Angelic Doctors all the way out to Cambridge! But though some of Henry Higginson's oldest friends had gone, he maintained his eager interest in "The Club" until the close. The last words of his last letter to me, eleven days before his death, are these: "X is to dine with us on Friday. Come and cheer him and show him how pleasant we all can be."

Major Higginson's fidelity to old army comrade-ships was constant. For more than forty years he was a member of an Officers' Club that dined once a month during the winter, holding the final meeting invariably on the anniversary of Lee's surrender. There were nineteen original members of this organization, all of them Boston men. Charles Francis Adams, Charles L. Peirson, Greely S. Curtis, Theodore Lyman, and Henry S. Russell were among the number.<sup>1</sup> Major Higginson was also a regular attendant upon the meetings of the Loyal Legion, and upon regimental reunions. He enjoyed particularly the reunion of the Second Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry, at their old camping-ground at Brook Farm, on July 8, 1911, fifty years after the regiment left for Virginia. A couple of notes addressed to Dr. Lincoln R. Stone of the Second Regiment will show the warmth of Major Higginson's feelings toward his surviving comrades, and his ever-present thoughts of the dead.

Dec. 1st, 1907.

DEAR LINCOLN:—

Your very kind note on my birthday was very welcome indeed — for old comrades and friends are few and dear.

Do you know that the memory of past deeds is less interesting than the hope to accomplish other deeds — so much

<sup>1</sup> The Boston *Sunday Herald* of April 4, 1915, gives an interesting account of this club. Colonel Robert Hooper Stevenson is now (1921) the sole survivor.

needed. As the country grows older and the requirements of many people are so much more complicated, the need of active, honest brains is greater — and we are growing feebler.

I sometimes think of the clear and simple minds which have left us.

Charles Lowell and Stephen Perkins were clear, keen, comprehensive, and Bob's simple and sound; Jim Savage's honest and earnest — and they all would have helped. Roosevelt's mind is vigorous and not clear or wise — and these men would have helped him in his honest purposes. This life is queer and trying, but we must work and think and try to be honest and faithful.

Good-bye, dear old mate.

Your affectionate

H. L. HIGGINSON.

What a sweet, clear, honest beauty Bob's was!

*March 31, 1919.*

DEAR LINCOLN:—

You are very kind to write me, and I would have replied long ago, but am still in bed, and often am not able to write a letter even by the hand of a stenographer. The truth is I get very tired indeed doing anything, and, although my recovery is marching on well, still I am eighty-four — and you are older. Neither of us should have lived so long. It is a great mistake to live after seventy-five.

It is a good while since we started out from Brook Farm, is n't it? — And since that time we all have been through a good deal. Jim Savage was a very unusual man. One could not call him remarkable; but a most disinterested, true, steady friend — and a more unconquerable foe I never saw. As a boy, he never was afraid of anything, and he would tackle any job or any man, no matter what the size of it was. I always hoped he had a quiet end, but I suppose we never have known. Because his brother-in-law — Professor Rogers — was a Vir-

ginian and had friends in Virginia, I believe Jim was well cared for.

Is n't it marvellous to think of the difference in our preparation and our equipment and that of the present day! . . . Next summer I hope to see you all on August 9th, but one never knows. . . .

As one studies Henry Higginson's enormous correspondence, one comes to the realization that his usefulness to the community is to be measured, not merely by this or that splendid or long-sustained act of munificence, but by the boundless energy with which he threw himself into multitudinous causes, and the sympathy with which he entered into the lives of an extraordinary variety of men and women. He was no humanitarian in the abstract, and he left abundant record of his dislike for the society of professional "reformers." But back of every good cause he saw a living person — a person for whom something ought to be done. He writes to Miss Grace Minns in 1910: "The number of folks who are to be smoothed, admonished, touched up, is wonderful — and now I've a word for Senator Aldrich about the currency; so good-night."

He was one of the men who like to keep letters, and he used often to tie them up in bundles marked "Interesting," without attempting to file them by authors or topics or any system whatever. One of these bundles, opened at random, contains letters from eighteen different men, and the names of the writers, together with the topic of each letter, will give a vivid illustration of the range of his correspondence. The letters are from Bishop Brent, about his work in the Philippines; Bishop Phillips Brooks, about talking in public ("Yes, it is good to talk, but sometimes one grows weary of himself and gets glimpses of how weary other people must be of him"); James Bryce, on Jews; J. M. Crafts, on the Institute of Technology; George A. Gordon, on church-going; Thomas Wentworth Higginson, on the family genealogy; Baron Kentaro Kaneko,

giving thanks for courtesies; Major J. R. Kean, about a Charities meeting; Charles F. McKim, on the interior of the Music Hall; Frank D. Millet, on the American Academy in Rome; Cardinal O'Connell, on Christianity and the working-man; Auguste Rodin, a bill for bronzes; Theodore Roosevelt, on the currency question; Elihu Root, on the United States Treasury; Augustus St. Gaudens, on the Shaw Memorial; Charlemagne Tower, on his interview with the Kaiser over Dr. Muck's leave of absence; Booker Washington, on a Tuskegee meeting; Leonard Wood, thanking Mr. Higginson for his contribution to a Cuban school at Santiago. And all of these gentlemen, together with thousands more, were duly "smoothed, admonished, touched up" by the indefatigable Major.

Goldsmith once remarked that he could "play on the German flute as well as most men"—implying, it is supposed, that no one really plays on the German flute very well. Major Higginson could dictate to a stenographer as well as most men, if not better, and yet his most characteristic letters were written with a quill pen, and preferably upon little square correspondence cards. He used these cards, particularly in his later life, for his countless messages of remembrance, sympathy, or congratulation. He inherited from his father an iron memory for anniversaries of every kind,—birthdays, wedding-days, anniversaries of deaths,—and his notes to a very wide circle of kinsfolk and intimate friends reveal the happiest faculty for saying the delicate and right word. As long, for instance, as Mrs. Charles Russell Lowell lived, Mr. Higginson rarely failed to write her on "Charley's" birthday, their wedding-day, the anniversary of his death, and the birthday of their daughter. He had a special gift for writing charming notes to women. Many of his wife's best friends were his also, and he addressed them with a touch of chivalry, of quaint poetic grace and gallantry, unexpected in a New Englander, and inimitably his own. "Attention to a woman is sunshine," he once wrote to a kinsman who was

about to be married. "They all need sunshine, steady sunshine. . . . All men are queer, and in their aims great and little forget their wives. Your head gets into the clouds, and in your wish to serve *man*, you forget *men and women*. Show A. to all of us who are living twenty years hence, and if her face is as peaceful as her mother's, you will get the prize — which then you will not want."

An earlier chapter has touched upon Henry Higginson's theory of letter-writing. It was something that interested him continually. One of his partners notes:—

"He had an extraordinary power of statement — both verbal and written. In fact, his letters are as unmistakable as a Rembrandt portrait. Once he came to a newly opened office and addressing the young partner in charge said, 'I would like to talk to you about letters; I talk to the President of Harvard College about them. I told him that nowadays our young men can neither write nor spell. You get over the difficulty of chirography by typing, but the fundamental trouble is that the men are not taught to express themselves. Now, my theory of a letter is this: you sit down and visualize the person you are addressing; you dictate exactly as if he were present; you watch the changes in his face and anticipate his replies. You put yourself into the letter exactly as if you were looking him in the eyes. You go through and cut out all the adjectives and adverbs; then you probably have a good letter.' He added a postscript in long hand to almost every letter, which made it real and personal."

This art of personal expression had its roots in his genius for friendship, for getting acquainted with individuals. He had prided himself in the Army on knowing by name every man in the two regiments with which he served. He carried the same faculty into his business life. He wanted to learn the name of every office-boy, and all there was to be known about him.

"As he came into the office one day," says a member of the

firm of Lee, Higginson and Co., "he discovered a new boy at the door — very young (fifteen years old) bright-eyed and apple-cheeked. He stopped and said, 'My name is Higginson; what is your name?' The boy replied, 'Thomson, sir — Sam Thomson.' Mr. Higginson said, 'Good! Are you a Jew?' — 'No, sir, I am a Presbyterian.' To which the Major responded, 'I think we are fifty-fifty. I'm a Unitarian.' Returning a month later, the Major remembered the boy and his name. Stepping up to the stool where he sat taking prices off the ticker and recording them on the sheet, the Major gravely said, 'Good morning, Sam; how's the market?' Somewhat flustered, Sam replied, 'Steel is 102, sir'; and the Major passed along. Whereupon Sam strolled over to the nearest youngster, threw out his chest, and said, 'Do you know what Mr. Higginson said to me? He said, "Sam, how's the market?"'"'

Another office anecdote will serve to illustrate his ability to handle young men who were not of the "Sam Thomson" type. A friend once asked him to take his son, just graduated, into the banking office, as a great personal favor. The gilded youth began as did all the others, answering the bell when someone pushed a button. Meandering into the Major's room, he was handed a telegram for the private wire signed, "H. L. H." As he leisurely departed, the Major curtly asked, "Harry, can you read that telegram? What is the signature?" Harry replied, "H. L. H." — "Do you know what that stands for?" — "Yes, sir: 'H. L. Higginson.'" — "No, that stands for 'Hurry like Hell!'" The look on Harry's face indicated that his education was progressing.

But whether it were office-boy or "gilded" college graduate, or long-time business associate, Mr. Higginson knew how to win and keep their friendship. From the scores of letters addressed to him on his birthdays, here are three, each written by a man of high standing in the Boston business world, and each expressive of an affection begun in boyhood.

"I suppose every boy at heart believes certain things, and wants to be assured that his beliefs are true. They smolder or burn brightly according to the way he behaves, and still more according to the way they are fed by the people he sees. I shall never forget how mine were affected by the talks you gave to us in college. Each time I came away my beliefs were blazing, with a perfect certainty that they were true, and an immense desire to put them into practice. And it has been so ever since. I don't mean that they have been put in practice; I wish they had; but they have come a good deal nearer than they otherwise would, and I have had a feeling of inner comfort and security which has made an immense difference in my happiness. So I am grateful to you on many accounts; and what is true of me is equally true of thousands of other boys who have seen you and heard you talk, altho' they have not had the chance of seeing you at close quarters. . . ."

"I first came into this office in 1881, thirty-two years ago. For a short time I was with the Union Pacific, but even then my relations with you were close. Looking back over these thirty-two years, I can appreciate how much your affectionate friendship has meant to me and how much I owe to you. I cannot remember a single moment when you have not been kind, considerate, and helpful. Neither has there been a time when my ambition has not been to please you. Don't think that I am not grateful because I don't say much. I am more than grateful, and I value your affection and good word more than anything else except the happiness of my wife and child. I hope you are having a happy birthday. You deserve it if anybody in this world does."

"My father died as I began to face life. From that day your care and counsel have helped me through such dark hours as came along, and made me feel that I did not lack a father's affection. It was right that this community should have ex-

pressed to you its affection. It may have felt moments of equal enthusiasm for public servants, but never such sustained feeling for a citizen because his joy was in service. To that expression I cannot add. I should only like to have you feel that since boyhood's days you have been my inspiration and joy."

Such tributes to his usefulness in the community gave Mr. Higginson the deepest satisfaction. But he had too much New England shyness to enjoy being praised to his face, unless the praise came from his intimates. President Eliot says:—

" . . . I was hurrying to the Corporation meeting one day, now perhaps twenty-five years ago, and met Major Higginson near the door of the building in which the Corporation office was and still is. As I came up to him I noticed he looked as if something very disagreeable had happened to him. His appearance was so unusual that I immediately asked, 'Why, what is the matter, Major?' He replied, 'Oh, that damned — , ' mentioning the name of a respectable citizen of Boston whom we both knew and had long known — 'Oh, that damned Jones; he has been patting me on the back right here on this sidewalk, and telling me that I have done well. He has been praising me! What right has he to do that? He and I never played together when we were boys. . . .'"<sup>1</sup>

But his correspondence is rich, fortunately, in letters from men who had "played" with him from boyhood, and who wrote without restraint. What comedies and tragedies lie hidden even in the business correspondence of a banker who was in State Street for fifty years! Here, for instance, is a yellowing bundle of letters from and to Clarence King, the mining expert,—and expert builder, too, of castles in Spain,—the friend of John Hay and John La Farge and Henry Adams and Howells and Raphael Pumpelly. Joseph Conrad could create a romance as fascinating as "Nostromo" from these

<sup>1</sup> *Harvard Alumni Bulletin*, Nov. 27, 1919.

Higginson-King letters about the control of the fabulously rich Yedras and Sombrerete silver mines; and yet who remembers to-day the "Anglo-Mexican Mining Company" of the eighteen-eighties, and the fortunes that came and went like sheet-lightning in the sky?

Less sensational, but even more typical of those personal relationships which underlay Mr. Higginson's business enterprises, is his correspondence with the pioneer railroad-builder, C. E. Perkins of the "C. B. and Q." Henry Higginson acted as his broker, and bought and sold for his friend's account — as he did for scores of other men and women — without overmuch consultation upon details. On one occasion Higginson offered to make good a loss which was apparently due to his own carelessness, and succeeded only in eliciting this delightful reply: —

*Aug. 24, 1899.*

MY DEAR HENRY: —

I have your letter of Aug. 23rd, and, while it is very good of you to suggest paying my losses on Wisconsin Central, I think, on reflection, that you will agree with me that it is an utterly impracticable scheme, and one which I cannot consent to for a moment.

In the first place, supposing you did buy the bonds for me without an order to do so (which I am not sure about), I nevertheless knew about it within a very short time, and could have sold out then and there, had I chosen to do so; but, as I preferred to take the chance of profit, I also necessarily took with it the chance of loss. Had I sold at once, I could, no doubt, have gotten out even, or better.

In the second place, since that time, and perhaps before, you have put me into things, or let me into things, out of which I have made money; so, if you are to pay losses on these Wisconsin Centrals, we must go through the books for about forty years, and have an accounting, and I must pay back to you,

no doubt, considerably more than you are now proposing to pay back to me.

In the third place, considering our relations for the last forty years, I shall agree to nothing of the kind, and will see you damned first!

Yours truly,

C. E. P.

I don't know what it is about accounts [confessed Mr. Higginson to William James]. It has been a great pleasure to look after yours, and it has been here a long time; but it has been a lucky account. I have had one for A for about as long, and that has been an unlucky account. I have one from B, and that has been just a fair account and no more. In one case I have bought discreetly or fortunately; in the other I have not. You, who are accustomed to study and understand the workings of men's minds will please explain this problem in psychology.

But William James, instead of attacking the psychological problem, contented himself with gratitude to Henry Higginson:—

"The diminution of care and nervous wear-and-tear and anxiety has been something for which A. and I have returned thanks weekly. It is different if one is in the fight one's self and has one's health. But I am doing, on a small stock of working energy, things of which I now believe (from evidence afforded) that they will influence the thought of the next generation (they are already stirring the puddle and making the toads jump about), and it is most important for me that that job should not be frustrated by solicitudes and prohibitions of an entirely irrelevant sort to keep me awake and tire me out. I'm glad I'm not in the market life of which you describe the spasms so eloquently — I could n't stand it at all! Therefore, once more, my gratitude can find no expression in words. . . ."

That letter dates from 1909, but it is pleasant to know that, as early as the disastrous year of 1893, William James had insisted upon Henry Higginson's using that "account" as if it were his own. "I shall esteem you no true man or friend if you don't take me at my word in case hereafter you are ever pushed so that the use of that amount will make things go any easier. It is yours, not mine, for an indefinite time to come."

If James could exclaim, "How lucky I am in having such a friend as you for a banker!" Higginson could also count himself lucky in having such a correspondent for more than five-and-thirty years. It was the banker who suggested James as the orator for the dedication of the Shaw Memorial in Boston in 1897; but James, characteristically enough, rated Higginson's address on Shaw in Sanders Theatre more highly than his own. "As for our speeches, yours was infinitely the more impressive, being the work of an honest man, and not that of a professional phrase-monger and paid rhetorician. Those are the *bad devils!*" It was to Higginson that James confided his plans for resigning his professorship.

ROME, Dec. 14, 1900.

You doubtless have received, or soon will receive, as member of the "Corporation," the resignation of my professorship, which I sent in the other day, under cover to Walcott. It seemed to me that a step already made morally certain in my own mind ought not, in the general interests of the department of philosophy, to be any longer postponed. There is a cumulative amount of nervous wear-and-tear involved in preparing and delivering lectures at the sound of the bell, through so many weeks of the year, which is great and far in excess of the intellectual output proper. I can work my small intellectual capital far more economically and with more profit relatively to the animal expenditure, I am sure (no matter how greatly my strength might improve after this), by the use of the pen than by that of the tongue; so, although I am still hoping for an improvement of indefinite amount, I have

had almost no doubts as to the wisdom of sending in my resignation now. . . .

Rome is great! I can't imagine a gloriouster place for a man to be turned loose on after breakfast, with eyes in his head, some little book-learning, muscles in his legs, and enough money in his pocket to buy such souvenir spoons as take his fancy. I have the eyes, but too little of the other requisites. But I say Rome is great all the same. . . .

"I congratulate you on the Yale LL.D.," he wrote in 1901. "They invited me, unworthy as I am, to come and receive one, but my health forbade."

In the following year it appears that James managed to "escape" a degree from Harvard:—

". . . As I have frequently said, I mean to support you in your old age. In fact the hope of that is about all that I now live for, being surfeited with the glory of academic degrees just escaped, like this last one which, in the friendliness of its heart, your Corporation designed sponging upon me at Commencement. Boil it and solder it up from the microbes, and it may do for another year, if I am not in prison! The friendliness of such recognition is a delightful thing to a man about to graduate from the season of his usefulness. 'La renommée vient,' as I have heard John La Farge quote, 'à ceux qui ont la patience d'attendre, et s'accroît à raison de leur imbécillité.'"<sup>1</sup>

Among the thousands of ingenious and pitiful and shameless "begging letters" received by Henry Higginson, what a veritable human document is the following from the hand of William James!

95 IRVING ST., CAMBRIDGE, MASS.  
Nov. 1, 1902.

DEAR HENRY:—

I am emboldened to the step I am taking by the consciousness that, though we are both at least 60 years old and have

<sup>1</sup> This letter has been printed in *Letters of William James*, vol. II, p. 173.

known each other from the cradle, I have never but once (or possibly twice) traded on your well-known lavishness of disposition to swell any "subscription" I was trying to raise.

Now the doomful hour has struck. The altar is ready, and I take the victim by the ear. I choose you for a victim because you still have some undecimated human feeling about you and can think on terms of pure charity — for the love of God, without ulterior hopes of returns from the investment.

The subject is a man of 50 who can be recommended to no other kind of a benefactor. His story is a long one, but it amounts to this, that Heaven made him with no other power than that of thinking and writing, and he has proved by this time a truly pathological inability to keep body and soul together. He is abstemious to an incredible degree, is the most innocent and harmless of human beings, is n't propagating his kind, has never had a dime to spend except for vital necessities, and never has had in his life an hour of what such as *we* call freedom from care, or of "pleasure" in the ordinary exuberant sense of the term. He is refinement itself mentally and morally; and his writings have all been printed in first-rate periodicals, but are too scanty to "pay." There's no excuse for him, I admit. But God made him; and after kicking and cuffing and prodding him for twenty years, I have now come to believe that he ought to be treated in charity pure and simple (even though that be a vice), and I want to guarantee him \$350 a year as a pension to be paid to the Mills Hotel in Bleecker Street, New York, for board and lodging and a few cents weekly over and above. I will put in \$150. I have secured \$100 more. Can I squeeze \$50 a year out of you for such a non-public cause? If not, don't reply and forget this letter. If "ja," and you think you really can afford it, and it is n't wicked, let me know, and I will dun you regularly every year for the 50 dollars.

Yours as ever,

Wm. JAMES.

It's a great compliment that I address you. Most men say of such a case, "Is the man deserving?" Whereas the real point is, "Does he need us?" Who is deserving nowadays?

Another correspondent, whose letters ranged from the stock-market to things undreamed of in State Street, was Henry Adams. His letters to Higginson begin in 1863, but those written in the twentieth century are the most characteristic. Adams had discovered by 1901 that the world was "sick."

HÔTEL BEAU SITE, PARIS, 4 Nov., 1901.

. . . I was in London last week; not a gay place just now, and much worried about the world. In fact, I have found the world pretty sick on my travels. Whether it is acute or chronic may be a question, but to my mind the German sickness goes deeper than the skin; I never could believe in German economics or German business as I've seen it carried on. When we were young, we never conceived of the Germans as possible rivals in practical matters. The collapse shows how exceedingly unpractical their expansion was. I believe the shipping expansion to be still worse. Both in Germany and in Russia the governments alone are carrying the industrials. Russia is what she has always been and, for at least three generations more, must continue to be; but Germany must root or die. Which? Her history is not dazzling.

For the last month you have been worrying Paris and London, not to say Berlin, badly with your copper. On high moral principles, I deeply disapprove of the way in which our people seem to have rigged the copper-market; but I am greatly interested in watching the struggle. For two hundred years Europe has clubbed her capital to rig markets against us, and now comes a first-class fight to see who has the biggest pile. Apparently Paris is with us, and, as far as I can see, France and America have all the money there is. I am sorry that I know none of the Rio Tinto people, to ask questions.

Still I do wish we could let prices down easily a little all round. Capital is terrifically strong and can now safely do things that would have been fatal fifty years ago; but all the same, bumps are almost as unpleasant to fear as to feel.

Europe and her embarrassments are going more and more to dominate our home issues; at least, to threaten our markets. At Washington they see it clearly enough. There is no great danger unless someone in Europe runs mad; but that may happen. In fact, England is mad already. Chamberlain's speeches show very clearly a failing mind, and Salisbury is long passed. I begin to look for a social collapse; perhaps a revolution. The old aristocracy and the new middle-class leaders have all broken down. They are discredited to a point that would be fatal in America. Luckily or unluckily, all England is senile with them. No young energy is left. . . .

Here is the opening paragraph of the nine-page letter about Rodin, referred to on a previous page:—

PARIS, 12 July, 1902.

MY DEAR AND LEARNED FRIEND:—

To you, who have dealt with artists all your life, there is no need to explain what artists are. Your friend Rodin is an artist. I am an irritable cuss. Yet, guided by the genial influence of your character, I've not quarreled with him, though I must now explain to you how very close I have been to breaking off relations. Still, down to the present moment, we are prodigies of courtesy. He is not in the least dishonest; he is only a peasant of genius; grasping; distrustful of himself socially; susceptible to flattery, especially to that of beautiful or fashionable women; and just now much elated by his personal triumphs in London and Prague. He is perfectly buzzy about his contracts; keeps no books or memoranda; forgets all he says, and has not the least idea of doing what is promised. If it were not that his marble block is in his way, I doubt

if he would ever remember to get it out of his way by executing an order. . . .

By 1902 Adams is toying with that theory of acceleration which he was soon to work out in his "Education of Henry Adams."

INVERLOCHY CASTLE, FORT WILLIAM, N.B.

14 August, 1902.

. . . For once, the whole world seems as dull as Scotland. I suppose America is working as hard as ever, and piling up wealth, but no one seems any longer surprised at America. I see nothing to prevent the next generation from quadrupling its activity and sixteen-folding its wealth; but as I am not in it, why should I care? One thing I hold to be mathematically certain. The world can't go on another century doubling up speed and power as it has done since 1800 without breaking its own neck. I shall be pleased to see if it comes in my time, for it can't hurt me much; but it will certainly wake up somebody some day if the skies suddenly fall. . . .

I hear not a word about politics or politicians. Politics ought to be the science of leaving things dexterously alone. On the whole our Government seems well adapted to do it. We have some annoyances caused by A—, but they are slight, and we know what they are. We don't know what the next will be. As for me, I have long since learned wisdom in big lumps and I've got it down to as fine a point as old what's-his-name did who burnt the Alexandrian Library. Wisdom is Silence. . . .

By the following year the search for truth brought Adams "as far as Ming porcelain."

1603 H STREET, 26 April, 1903.

. . . I have regretted to lose a visit from you this winter, but I suspect that you are wise in keeping away. For myself,

I am humbly seeking truth. You have found it. My search has brought me only as far as Ming porcelain. I have derived much pleasure from the jar which stands since January on my corner book-case, and looks me in the face with every sincerity of truth. I wish I may say as much of Sargent's portrait.<sup>1</sup> I wish still more that you may say that it lives you. The jar lives me. . . .

Two years later, just before the adjournment of Congress, he is puzzled about the world — and Wall Street. This was the year when he wrote the "Education."

1603 H STREET, 26 Feb., 1905.

. . . We shall all flit as soon as we've tucked dear Theodore into his little bed. Don't you wish he may go to sleep! Nobody seems to mind him, which amuses me. Who is the fool here? Is it Wall Street or Theodore? Is it the Jews or the Tsar? When we were young, everybody would have had fits at a quarter part of what we have had to stand this year past. I wonder whether a general war all over the world, with a total collapse of industry, would stir Wall Street now. . . .

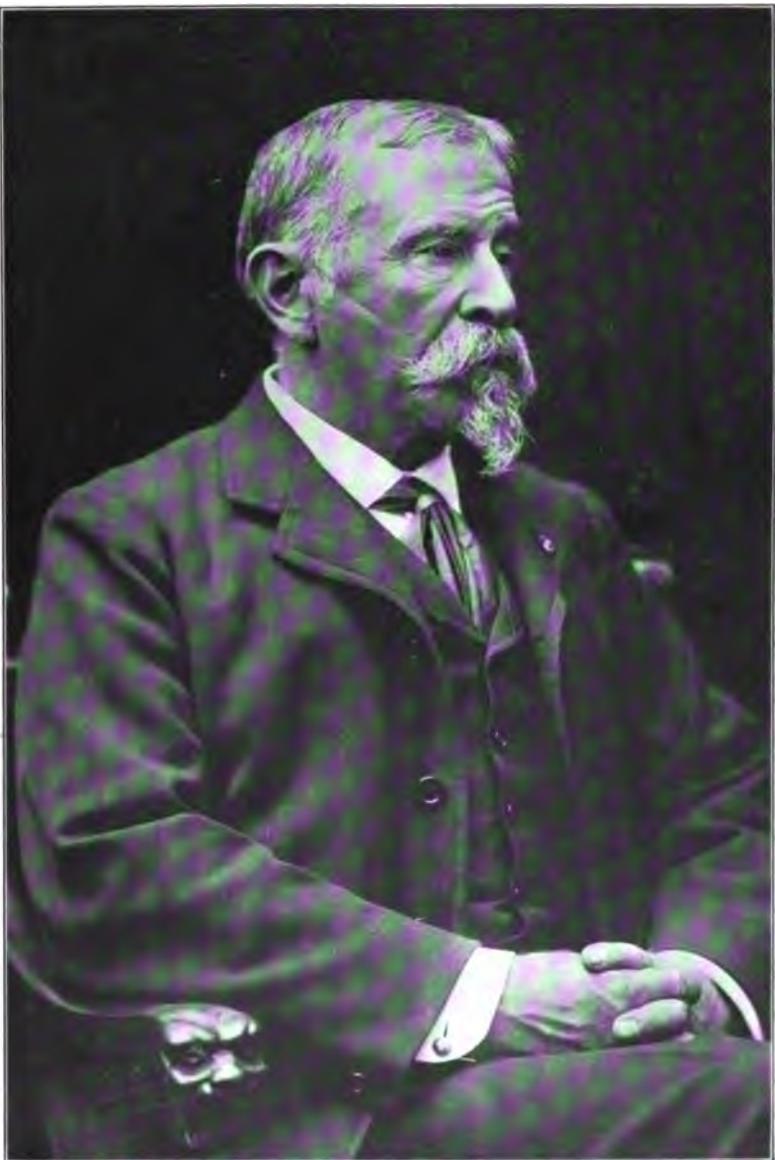
In the following letters, he refers to the privately printed copies of the "Education," now ready for circulation among his friends: —

1603 H STREET, 17 Feby., 1907.

. . . Truly I should squirm at having to recommend a teacher of law,<sup>2</sup> but I will ask better and wiser men than myself what to do about it. The danger is of catching a prig. International law, like Art, is a wild world of priggism. Never should a cautious historian wish himself therein. He respects no law.

<sup>1</sup> H. L. H. was then sitting for the portrait now in the Harvard Union.

<sup>2</sup> For the Harvard Law School.



HENRY L. HIGGINSON  
From a photograph by Notman (about 1905)



I have much missed you in matters of wise advice, for I have needed someone to teach better things than law. . . .

As for me, I am very, very old; so old that I can't help telling about it, and becoming more of a bore than when I was only young. I have even written it out, and mean to ask you some day to look at it, as my last words of imbecility on man and matters. I have seen Calumet sell at a thousand, and the roads choked by their own food. Figure up that equation on Calumet! Some forty years ago Quin Shaw was using his last dollar to *carry in* at nothing. If the figure stands thus: 1: 1000: : 1000: X, what is to happen in the year 1947? . . .

1603 H STREET, April 1, 1907.

. . . The volume, or rather the sheets of the possible projected book would have been sent to you earlier, for your consent or correction, had I not been obliged to wait for the permission of persons more seriously affected, such as presidents, senators and ladies. I am still waiting for a few belated *beleidigte*, the chief of whom is Mrs. Hay, still in California; and the State Department, dumb as beetles. Nevertheless, I regard you as one of the family, and therefore entitled to your will. For my personal interest, the book is written only for the last three chapters. I doubt whether your personal interest can carry you much beyond the first three. In any case, I will correct, erase or deny anything you dislike, even to suppressing the whole if you say so. It is not likely to suit my successors at Harvard. . . .

25 AVENUE DU BOIS DE BOULOGNE

27 May 1907.

. . . I received also, and read, the volume of Charley Lowell.<sup>1</sup> We are piously embalming our friends in mummy-form; and I wonder whether any archæologist of the year 3000 will decipher them. Let's hope they will find amusement in

<sup>1</sup> This was the *Life and Letters*, edited by Edward W. Emerson.

it. For myself, I am very much more interested in the future, and I think Charley Lowell was of the same mind. He was a 1900 man, and we are very short of such.

You and Alex Agassiz are the 'only ones of our Boston lot who have accomplished anything, for I don't count the mere running with the machine. I suppose the war killed two or three more, who might have rivalled you, and Charley Lowell may have been one. But would he have lived long anyway?

Paris is a terror, a dream of chaos. I stay here because I have no other to go to; but it is rather worse than New York. And we thought our Paris of 1860 a fast place! Yet the women adore it more than the men do — and the automobile — and the restlessness! Read me that riddle ahead for sixty years more! It is the only book I care to study now. . . .

At the end of Roosevelt's administration Henry Adams writes (February 25, 1909): "With March 4 I quit the game. All ends! Next winter, my world of Lafayette Square will have vanished, and I will let you run the show." A year later his tone is still that of affectionate, whimsical detachment: —

1603 H STREET, 3 Feby., 1910.

. . . From time to time, nieces or other stray vagabonds give me hints of your doings, and they have told me that your health had been poor. I am sorry for it. . . .

Every day I hug myself with delight at the thought that you young fellows, and not I, are running the solar system. As you are all so cocksure of running it right, I can look on and tell you what nice fellows you are and how nicely you are doing it. If I had been left to myself, I never would have known how to do it so well. I don't know that I would have done it even with the help of my brothers and first cousins.

I am still smiling — like Charles Eliot — and hope you are too. There is nothing like smiles. . . .

But the death of Alexander Agassiz, on March 27, 1910, stirred him beyond his wont.

1603 H STREET, 2 April, 1910.

. . . I wish I were there to show what respect I could for Alex. If I showed all I felt, it would be worth while to go far. He was the best we ever produced, and the only one of our generation whom I would have liked to envy. When I look back on our sixty years of life, and think of our millions of contemporaries, I am pacified when the figure of Alex occurs to me, and I feel almost reconciled to my own existence. We did one first-rate work when we produced him, and I do not know that, thus far, any other century has done better.

I feel as though our lives had become suddenly poor — almost as though our generation were bankrupt — by his loss. He stood so high above anyone else on my horizon that I can no longer see a landmark now that he is gone. To anyone else except you I should have to explain all this feeling, but you know how true and natural it is, and I can leave it so. . . .<sup>1</sup>

Dr. Weir Mitchell was another friend who was deeply moved at Agassiz's sudden death. He wrote to Henry Higginson: "The friends of my past years are dropping around me like the leaves in autumn, but although, as one nears the fatal rifle-pits, casualties multiply and death becomes familiar, the passing of so vitalized a spirit as Agassiz gives one a more than usual sense of mortality."

<sup>1</sup> This letter has been printed in the *Letters and Recollections of Alexander Agassiz*, p. 447.

## CHAPTER XIII

### THE PUBLIC SERVANT

Personally I know no better example of the useful citizen portrayed by Charles Lowell than he whom we meet here to-night to honor. But he is much more than a useful citizen. He is a great public servant. He has never held office; he has never desired to; but he has been a great public servant in the highest and largest sense. Every year and all the years have been marked by service to his country, to his state and to his fellow men. On the battlefield and in the sheltered city, in unending charities, in the encouragement of art and the advancement of learning — wherever there was a good cause to be found, there has his service been rendered. — HENRY CABOT LODGE, at the dinner in honor of Major Higginson's eightieth birthday, November 18, 1914.

THAT personal quality which colors the letters of William James and Henry Adams is not lacking in the ample section of the Higginson correspondence which deals primarily with public affairs. Henry Higginson personalized most questions, and his letters about political, social, and economic issues are as vivid as anything he wrote. He had distinguished correspondents in these fields, and their views were frequently the opposite of his own. Never was his contact with other minds so rich and varied as in the epoch-making period that began with the Spanish-American War in 1898 and ended in the summer of 1914.

Before passing to this group of letters upon public affairs, it must be remembered that Henry Higginson was, by taste and habit, a private citizen. He had slender interest in the national game of party politics. Walter H. Page used to say that Americans cared in reality but little for politics as such; that their interests were primarily economic and social, and that they were compelled to use a machinery originally designed for political ends, — and now out of date, — in order to bring to pass their economic and social desires. Higginson

shared to a considerable degree this distrust of politics and politicians. In March, 1867, he wrote to his father: "It seems to me as if no man in Congress really *knew* anything about taxes or finance. Any able, well-informed man could teach the whole crew something. Surely men enough in New York, Philadelphia, Boston, or the Western cities could instruct them." Carlyle's "Cromwell," which he had just been reading, is not more contemptuous of parliamentary wind-bags. And over forty years later, in an article in the Boston "Herald" (December 28, 1918), he is still repeating his dislike of legislation: "Let us ask Congress to do their work in their own way and let us [business men] do ours in our way."

He was typically American, likewise, in his combination of Hamiltonianism and Jeffersonianism. Fervently and sometimes fiercely patriotic, an advocate of a "strong" government, a central banking system, the gold standard, and the rights of "property," it was chiefly in his disbelief in a protective tariff that he parted company with Hamilton. Yet he shared Jefferson's ardent faith in the common man, the "plain people." He wanted to have the Federal Government keep its hands off the private citizen as far as possible. Decade after decade he fought the steady encroachment of governmental supervision and control of transportation and industry. He wished to be let alone. No man desired more passionately the happiness and freedom of his fellow citizens; but to much of the Progressive legislation enacted under Roosevelt, Taft, and Wilson, he gave but tardy and reluctant assent. It is easy to say that he was illogical; yet it is precisely by this illogical blending of the ideals of Hamilton and of Jefferson, this Yankee dexterity in swapping moods and methods as successive emergencies arise, that the Republic has maintained its life.

On the main issue of the Spanish-American War, Henry Higginson had no hesitation. His ancestor Francis Higginson,

who was a small boy when the Armada sailed, could not have blazed more hotly against Spain than Major Higginson. He raised the money for the equipment of the Harvard Battalion. He writes to his kinsman Henry Cabot Lodge, just before the battle of Santiago:—

KNICKERBOCKER CLUB, July 1st, '98.

NOBLE SENATOR:—

The President has done little to be criticized, but one thing troubles me. He should have, at the outset, called for 250,000 men. They were sure to be needed, and in any case would have been in training — a most needed process, which only time can give. And now I wish he'd put 100,000 more men into camp — U.S. volunteers in U.S. and not in State Regiments — and then give these new U.S. Regts. to trained U.S. Officers. Why not?

Griffin is getting a very fine set of enlisted men — so he tells me and so I see. Within a few days two Harvard students — Livermore's son and Stephen Higginson, son, grandson, great-grandson, great-great-grandson of Stephen of the Revolution — have enlisted in the regiment as privates. Had to! Could n't help it! We of '61 got commissions, and these boys go us one better and enlist! God! I believe the whole country would enlist if need be.

Here I sit in the dude club — sports — loafers — athletes — dandies — raised in cotton-wool — a rose-garden — scoffers — what you please — a little club — and 40 men have already gone — 11 per cent of the club, which has many *old* men as well as young. Twenty seniors of Harvard College and many of the older schools are in the service, chiefly privates.

At Commencement Charles Eliot, in reply to Charles Adams, spoke out warmly and said, "In '61 I knew well and saw daily the men who went into the service and now I see daily the young men here — and I declare that these men of to-day are moved by the same feelings and motives as those," — and

the audience cheered him as he said it, — and I noticed that day that every mention of the war, etc., was rec'd with the same spirit, by the *old* men and young, and the audience was much more old than young. It is wonderful — wonderful!

Of course, I, like an old fool, feel so, and long to go into the service, and Jim Hig, too. But I'm struggling with the Hospital Ship and begging for money with all my wiles. Tell X to send to Draper \$5000. I'm treasurer, but she hates me.

My profound respects to the President, whose name here draws cheers, and tell him to call *very* liberally for troops *now* and train them — as a benefit to the nation — a great benefit. He'll get all he asks, and while it makes me cry to see these lads go, I wish them to do so, as an education. By the Eternal! It is our country and we are here to guard and help it. Call at once and largely! Too many if you please.

Senator Lodge replied: —

U.S. SENATE CHAMBER, WASHINGTON  
July 3, 1898.

DEAR HENRY: —

Whether I am a "noble senator" or not, your letter was a very noble letter, and I felt a choking sensation in my throat as I finished it. It would have been well to have called for 250,000 men at the start, and I think that they are considering a 100,000 more now. We have a bad business at Santiago and must send a lot more there.

It is most splendid and most uplifting the way our boys are going in everywhere, and it makes one love the country better than ever. I want to go, but I should be a fool, I suppose, and only fill a place some younger man could fill better, while here I can be of some use. . . . It is a righteous war and inevitable. Spanish despotism and our free government could no more continue side by side than freedom and slavery. I send a mite for the hospital ship and will write to X.

The difference between Henry Higginson and a host of men who shouted "Remember the Maine" was that he remembered also the sick and wounded and the education of the Cubans for self-government. A few lines from notes to his wife will give a hint of his activities.

*August 19, 1898.* We sent cooks, food, etc., to Montauk Point, and also a good physician. The need is great and we must patch up the invalids. . . . Hollister of the Law School has just died of wounds, poor boy.

*August 22.* It has been a confused and hot day again, for the camp at Montauk Point is full of sick and convalescent, neglected soldiers, whom we are trying to help. I was to have gone to Maine with several great R.R. men to-day, but gave it up because these sick men need help. It is horrid.

*August 23.* Still busy with the soldiers, 200 of whom were landed here [Boston], very ill.

*October 28.* The Bay State came in late to-day, and G. and I have seen her unloaded: 133 convalescent and sick, 19 on stretchers, and two dead. It was most interesting and painful, and as for those nurses and doctors, they are wonderful.

After the war was over, it was Major Higginson who raised the money for a model school at Santiago, and he was largely instrumental in sending the 1500 Cuban teachers for a summer session at Harvard. No wonder that these teachers, as they filed up to shake his hands, shouted, "*Viva Señor Higginson, el amigo de Cuba!*"

On the vexed question of the retention of the Philippine Islands, Major Higginson inclined to the opinion of the Anti-Imperialists, among whom he had many friends. Mrs. Charles Russell Lowell wrote him eloquent Anti-Imperialist letters, but even these pale before the following paragraph from William James:—

*NAUHEIM, Sept. 18, 1900.*

. . . I read your political observations with respect, and see how you are professionally bound to resist Bryan. But I pray for his victory none the less. There are worse things than financial troubles in a Nation's career. To puke up its ancient soul, and the only things that gave it eminence among other nations, in five minutes without a wink of squeamishness, is worse; and that is what the Republicans would commit us to in the Philippines. Our conduct there has been one protracted infamy towards the Islanders, and one protracted lie towards ourselves. If we can only regain our old seat in the American saddle, and get back into some sincere relations with our principles and professions, it seems to me it makes very little permanent difference what incidental disturbances may accompany the process, for this crisis is one which is sure to determine the whole moral development of our policy in a good or a bad way for an indefinite future time. . . .

After the election Major Higginson wrote to Senator Lodge:

*November 12, 1900.*

I think many wise thoughts about the election and believe this thing, that if a good and able Democrat of high character had been put up, Mr. McKinley would not have been elected, which simply means that the country has not been satisfied with the Republican administration in regard to foreign parts and that, in my judgment, you have got to remodel a good many things and put that and Cuba on a quieter basis, leaving the inhabitants to manage their own affairs, or else you will go out of power next time.

The following summer he wrote to another friend: "Holding Manila was a mistake." Yet later, when Cameron Forbes, the son of his comrade Colonel William H. Forbes, and the grandson of his old friend John M. Forbes, was appointed

Governor-General of the Philippines, Major Higginson wrote to him: "It is a call from your country and you cannot refuse. Even if you should not return, we should mourn you, but we should be glad you had done the right thing. Go, and an old man's blessing be with you."

When Governor Forbes's health was impaired by his labors in the Islands, and many friends urged his return, it was Major Higginson who exhorted him to stick to his post. In no letter has he put more of his philosophy of life.

*November 22, 1910.*

DEAR CAMERON:—

. . . To begin almost at the end: I cannot go to the Philippines because I am always sick at sea or, if not sick, wretched, and because it is no rest for me at all. Next, I am really an old man, and my wife would not let me go without a doctor, for some break might come on board ship, as with Alex Agassiz. I should very much like to see the Philippines, but shall never go farther than Liverpool again, and then soon after that to Mount Auburn, or such other point as may be designated. . . .

Now, as to yourself: Ralph said to me once: "It is all very well for Cameron to work out there, but supposing he dies in the service?" My reply was: "Very good! What better can a man expect than to do as good service as Cameron has done and is doing, and to die in harness?" The world will have got full value out of you, and you will have got full value out of life, and that is what you were made for. Many of us would be very sorry if you did not come home to rejoice us with your presence, and that you might enjoy your laurels; but if you die in the service, you will only do what many a good fellow has done again and again in the Indies, in this country — in peace, and in war. What's the odds? I thought you had a great chance, and you have used it admirably. If you were my boy, I should feel just so, and I should mourn your death or

broken health, and I should feel very proud of you. I do feel very proud of you now.

Every now and then, your grandfather Forbes used to talk through his hat. He once told me that he did not wish his sons to do anything except enjoy life and have boats and horses, and I did not believe a word that he said, nor do I now. Your father died in the harness, having set agoing one of the wonderful companies of the world,<sup>1</sup> and he gave it a tone that it has never lost. I think he got all the "change" out of life that a man could have, and, if you add to that his own disbelief in his ability as a business man, I think you will see something pretty fine. He has left as good a name as your grandfather, he did quite as good work. Your grandfather did work at high pressure, and again and again came very near breaking down, but he accomplished so much with his enormous energy and courage that I regard his sufferings or his collapses from over-strain as of no consequence. I believe in toiling terribly, and the only thing that I ask of my body is to give me the power to work and work until I drop. In this modern world there is so much to do, so many places to fill, so many errors to correct, so many men and women to help, that one's own comfort or pleasure seems of no consequence.

I hope that you will not leave your task, but will stay there until you have got the Islands on a much higher basis than at present. It is most interesting to note what you have been at, and it is also consoling to see that you know enough to make others work, and to do as little as possible yourself. Charley Perkins said long ago that the head of a great corporation should have nothing to do but sit and watch; that he should have no work, and then he would have more than he could do. You are in the same position. It is your duty to keep as well and as fresh as possible, and to make others do everything that it is possible for them to do. Never mind about the honor, the credit or anything else — it is honor enough to

<sup>1</sup> The American Bell Telephone Co.

accomplish the task which you have undertaken. Your mother has gone out, and will be glad to fetch you home, and I hope she will not succeed. I should much like to see you again before I die (there is no sign of the funeral yet), but I want to see you fill that position as well as now for some years. It is a tremendous task to undertake; it is a great chance for a full-blooded man — and if you show your power to do great work, you have got to do it. That is the rule of life, and you neither can nor will dodge it. Of course it is not necessary to work at fever heat, or be as nervous as a witch, as your grandfather was; but the remembrance of all such moments in his life is as nothing compared to the great satisfaction and delight which he and all his friends felt in what he could accomplish.

Stay where you are, and keep at it! Keep as well as you can, and remember that you hoped for this place, and your friends hoped for it on your account. May I repeat that, if a man shows himself able to carry a load, he has got to carry it. Now, this talk is not hard; it is merely recognizing the conditions of a very restless, eager period of history, in which men are looking all around to see what may be done and what is to come. If you were here, you would be in a fever, just as we are; if you are there, you may find your life more peaceful than here. . . . If my letter reads like a sermon, pray remember that it is only because I wish you every good, and because I believe you can accomplish a great task. . . .

As for party allegiance, Major Higginson was a Republican with somewhat frequent lapses. He went with the Mugwumps for Cleveland against Blaine. He had a horror of Bryan and his free-silver heresies. He voted for McKinley in 1896 and 1900, for Roosevelt in 1904, Taft in 1908, Wilson in 1912, and Hughes in 1916. In Massachusetts politics he was an Independent. He rarely attended political rallies, though he once presided at a meeting in Curtis Guild's campaign for the governorship. "I have always believed in free trade, or as near

an approach to it as we could get," he wrote to Cameron Forbes; and to Republicans of the "Home Market" school, of whom there are many in State Street, this was almost unpatriotic. Yet Higginson learned it from John M. Forbes and Colonel Henry Lee.

Few Americans change their general political views after they are thirty. Henry Higginson tried harder than most men to keep learning and to maintain an open mind. But his business experience of the 1870's and 1880's, during the expansion of railroads through the West, remained the formative influence upon his opinions. His natural sympathies were with the pioneer builders, who took great risks in the hope of great profits; with the far-seeing corporations that had had the patience, energy, and honesty to create gigantic industrial enterprises. Why should the Government lay its restrictive hand upon such men? When political agitators and academic economists talked of curbing "Capital," Higginson's mind flashed back to the Forbeses and the Perkinses, to "Alex" Agassiz and "Quin" Shaw, to Theodore Vail and Charles Coffin. He had summered and wintered with these men, and knew them to be honest and high-minded. Why afflict them with Sherman Anti-Trust laws, Interstate Commerce Commissions, and regulations forbidding interlocking directorates? Why cannot Congress adjourn and leave us in peace? Presidents and law-makers are disturbers of traffic, troublers of Israel.

For, after all, who are the most useful citizens of the American Commonwealth? Higginson and C. E. Perkins once debated that question. Here are the views of the railroad-builder, and Higginson, at bottom, agreed with him.

ON CAR "OLD HUNDRED" IN ILLINOIS  
*March 8th, 1900.*

MY DEAR HENRY:—

The other day, when I ventured the remark that the men who made money were public benefactors, you said I was

talking to hear myself talk, and, as we were both in a hurry, nothing more came of it. Now, having time to spare, and always having a wish to convince you of your errors, I should like to continue the conversation.

It takes all kinds of men and women to make the world, many of whom desire to be, and a few of whom are, benefactors in some degree; but to attempt to go into the question of exactly what makes one a benefactor, and what are the various degrees of the good different kinds of individuals may do, would obviously take volumes, and this is not my purpose. But here are a few points for your consideration:—

First. It is literally true that men can live only by the sweat of their faces (Genesis 3: 19). This is true as a general proposition. The number of individuals who live without work is so small, compared with the working millions, that they are of no account. This is true among civilized people and among uncivilized people. Looking at the population of the world, men can only live by hard work, and most of the workers have no comforts, and, of course, no luxuries.

Second. Now, I say that they who, regardless of their motives, do something which mitigates this situation, thus giving man a chance for progress, are public benefactors. Without such mitigation of his circumstances, no other kind of assistance is of the slightest use to a man — one who is hungry and cold can think of nothing else, no gospel touches him.

Third. I say that men who do something to lessen the cost of living are the only ones who do mitigate this situation; and

Fourth. I say the men who successfully improve, organize, and make use of the means of production and distribution, or help others to do so, are those who do lessen the cost of living.

Fifth. It is clear, as a rule, that men do not obtain something for nothing, or for any less than the something is worth. So, for what men acquire, they must give value received. Therefore, if men acquire much, they must give much, and if

much or little is acquired, by improving the means of producing or distributing the things which people wish to consume, those who acquire it are public benefactors.

Sixth. Furthermore, I say that as a rule they who acquire most, through successful improvement and organization of the means of production and distribution, whereby the cost of living is lessened, are the greatest public benefactors, because they do most to mitigate the hardship of life, and to make progress possible. What they acquire is the best possible measure of the value of what they do. Other benefactors are secondary.

What do you say?

C. E. PERKINS.

Seven years later, in Roosevelt's administration, the railroad situation was in one of its many acute phases. Higginson corresponded voluminously with the President, and drew some vigorous replies,<sup>1</sup> from which a single quotation must here suffice:—

February 11, 1907.

The present unsatisfactory condition in railroad affairs is due ninety-five per cent to the misconduct, the short-sightedness, and the folly of the railroad men themselves. Unquestionably there is loose demagogic attack upon them in some of the States, but not one particle of harm has come to them by Federal action; on the contrary, merely good. I wish very much that our laws could be strengthened, and I think that the worst thing that could be done for the railroads would be an announcement that for two or three years the Federal Government would keep its hands off of them. It would result in a tidal wave of violent State action against them throughout three fourths of this country. I am astonished at the curious short-sightedness of the railroad people — a short-

<sup>1</sup> *Theodore Roosevelt and his Time*, by J. B. Bishop (N.Y., 1920), vol. II, pp. 38, 39, 82.

sightedness which, thanks to their own action, extends to would-be investors. Legislation such as I have proposed, or whatever legislation in the future I shall propose, will be in the interest of honest investors and to protect the public and the investors against dishonest action.

I may incidentally say that I think that no possible action on railroads would have as disturbing an effect upon business as action on the tariff at this time. I earnestly and cordially agree with you on the need of currency legislation, and have been doing all I can for it; but the big financial men of the country, instead of trying to get sound currency legislation, seem to pass their time in lamenting, as Wall Street laments, our action about the railroads.

And now, as a terse presentation of the views shared by Henry Higginson, take these three paragraphs from letters of C. E. Perkins to him.

BURLINGTON, IOWA, Mar. 20, 1907.

MY DEAR HENRY: —

. . . If you are right, that the depression will be shortlived, perhaps I have made a mistake; but I have a feeling that Rooseveltism and labor-unionism may have precipitated what of course was bound to come some day, that is, a period of rest and depression, after a long period of extravagance and over-investment. A community, or a nation, is in that respect like an individual. I told Hill last fall I thought we, as a nation, were spending more than our income, but he did not seem to think there was much in it. It is easy to destroy or impair confidence, but a slow business getting it back again. However, as my old friend Lyman Cook used to say, "the longer I live the less I know, and the more I become convinced that talking does very little good." You accuse me of sitting back and saying nothing; but how much good has been done by the talkers? Hill has been talking, and telling the truth, for

the last two or three years, but it has not produced any good effect. Twenty years ago I wrote a letter on the subject of railroad regulation; probably you never read it. In preparing it, I had the help of John M. Forbes, Charles J. Paine, T. Jefferson Coolidge, Wm. Endicott, and John L. Gardner, all sound and level-headed men, as you know. I sent that letter to Senator Cullom before the passage of the Interstate Commerce Law, and it did not have as much effect as a fly on a cart-wheel. . . .

BURLINGTON, IOWA, *March 25, 1907.*

MY DEAR HENRY:—

I have your letter of March 21st. You ask what I think about federal charters for railroads? I had never given the subject much consideration, because I have never been able to see how any of the railroads I am interested in could change from the state charters they now exist under, and become federal corporations. So, even if it were true that it is easier to get bad laws in the states than it is at Washington, I do not see how we can escape from state legislation. I cannot agree, however, that the states are any worse than Congress. Indeed, all the most serious legislation against the railroads has been in Washington. The Sherman Anti-Trust Law of 1890 is probably the most vicious and unreasonable law that was ever passed by any legislative body, and there is nothing in any state that I know of, any worse than the Interstate Commerce Law and its various amendments, giving more power to half a dozen lawyers than is possessed by the Czar of Russia, and making it directly for the interest of the railroads to buy immunity from these gentlemen, when the present hysterical fit of virtue is over. . . .

BURLINGTON, IOWA, *June 18, 1907.*

MY DEAR HENRY:—

. . . I think, as I suggested yesterday, that sooner or later there will be a new alignment of parties on the issue of States'

Rights, but this may not come about before the next presidential election. All of these new-fangled statesmen, including both Roosevelt and Bryan, and the crowd of youngsters who swarm around them, are hell-bent on centralizing everything at Washington, and wiping out state lines. This situation raises a real, and, as it seems to me, the only real issue of importance upon which the country can divide. These modern philosophers contend that the general government, because of the delegated power to regulate commerce among the states, can go into a state and interfere with any or all of its police regulations which in any way affect interstate commerce. They claim, for example, that because the C. B. and Q. R. R. Co., of Illinois, being a corporation chartered by that state, is engaged, to some extent, as part of its business, in interstate commerce, therefore Congress may pass laws under which the government at Washington may come into the State of Illinois, and say what this interstate carrier shall charge, what wages it shall pay, how and when it shall run its trains, and regulate every other detail of the railroad's operation. This is too much, and I do not believe the people will stand it. It is more than a question of law. It is a question of politics, of changing fundamentally our form of government, which is based on the idea of *local self-government*."

To one who reads this correspondence in 1921, it seems clear that Roosevelt's political prescience gave him the advantage of the debate. The purely competitive era of American railroading was nearing its end, and the railroad men of the older generation could not see it.

In the campaign of 1912, while Higginson was hesitating between Taft, Roosevelt and Wilson, he wrote the following letter:—

. . . Theodore is the most capable man of the three, and is a very attractive and brilliant creature; but men like to

know what they can count on, and they do not feel sure that they can count on him. Theodore talks nonsense about Wall Street, where most of the men are honest — far honester than the politicians, who promise this or t'other for votes. He talks about the corporations as being wicked, which means that the directors are wicked. I have known the inside of corporations for a great many years, and I have yet to see a director who has taken advantage of his position as director. He makes no more money than any stockholder, and he gets kicks and curses if his corporation does not go on well and is not successful, although neither he nor the active officers of the corporation are to blame. It would be very easy to drive respectable men out of the corporations, and then an ordinary class of men — perhaps crooks — would come in, who might spoil the corporation or who would be pretty sure to do wrong things, including robbery.

Incorporation is the most brilliant invention of our past century, enabling everybody to have a share; and when Theodore and his mates, and Wilson and plenty of the politicians talk of the crimes of the corporations, they are simply . . . forgetting that they are cuffing just such people as you and X, who are also stockholders — and perhaps larger stockholders than any of the directors. Most directors do consider themselves trustees, and act accordingly.

I am going to New York this week, with the thermometer at near 100, to be present at a corporation meeting. I have been in this corporation for twenty years, and have been cuffed and kicked very hard. It has had a very fine, a very disastrous, and a very wonderful life, and it owes its success to the wonderful services of its active officers and to the care and guidance of the directors. The disaster came in the break-down in 1893, when our politicians ran amuck, did not know whether the nation's dollar should be paid in silver or gold, and frightened people so much that they put their money in boxes and hid it, which in itself is a crime.

I know about the wickedness of some of our rich men, and deprecate to the last degree their accumulation of riches. Some of the great bankers I have seen and known intimately, and I can tell you from positive knowledge, that, if the great bankers had not stood together in 1907 and done the best they could for the public, you would have lost your house, we might have failed, and the ruin of the land would have been excessive. Those men did not try to make money, and they did not produce bad results, but they risked their fortunes and their health in preserving the community from terrible disaster. (I am not telling you anything I do not know.)

You have lived among a farming population more or less, and a pretty poor population, too. I do not believe there is a man in Westport or in Essex County who is higher minded or more honest than most of the business men whom I know. . . . Do not suppose for a moment that any one class of men is honester than another, unless it may possibly be the physicians and the teachers. It is very hard to be honest, it is very hard to see the other man's rights and to put one's self in the proper position toward others. I have been trying to do it for eighty years nearly, and still have to think just what is due me and what is due the other fellow.

All these things our three candidates for the Presidency ignore or are ignorant of.

As to the higher prices, they come in part from people wanting more things, in part from people working less, in part from high taxes, and in part from the increase in gold. We ought to reduce our tariff to almost nothing, and I hope we shall do it. If we break up the great corporations, we shall raise the price of everything that they produce, and, more than that, we shall put out of work a great many men who need it and a great many women who need it still more. If I could see a Presidential candidate who understood the business interests, I should be glad to vote for him; and "business" does not include us in our line or bankers or shop-keepers or

farmers or working people, but all of them. If you will think how much labor and thought and anxiety the best men in every community spend upon the care of the savings banks alone, — where they get nothing, where they cannot borrow from their own banks, where they are paid no salary, and where, in short, they have no possible advantage, — if you will think of all they do, can you tell me of anybody among the workingmen who does so much? All these facts are ignored, and the classes invited to attack each other. It is a very poor business. We shall worry through it and come out on the other side; but the men who foment that sort of thing are to my mind very reprehensible.

In saying all this, I do not at all forget what has been before me since I was eighteen years old — that we must help the working man and woman in all sorts of ways, that they must have a larger part of what is going — and I know that plenty of corporations are working that way. . . .

Dear child, I say all this to you because you are an uncommonly sensible creature, and because you can look at things as they are. Ignorance of facts with regard to our fellow creatures is a curse, and if it cannot be cured, it becomes a crime. . . .

A second letter to the same correspondent, on August 11, renews the defense of corporations and trusts, but admits that there are evils involved: —

. . . "The predatory rich!" as T. R. says. Who are they? sons of farmers, mechanics, day-laborers, etc., who fought hard for their first \$100, and so believe that they can do as they like with their millions. They never had any good traditions, never had any high fine talk and should not be expected to act well. Their successors may well do better. . . . God Almighty is looking round and lifts us along — slowly perhaps, but well. And he has made rules which T. R. forgets. By the

way, can you name one R.R. which has not had to fight hard for existence? and its stockholders have had to wait. But the public gets the benefit of the transportation — and the new country. If you say to the enterprisers, "Heads I win, tails you lose," enterprisers will reply, "Nothing doing." I saw my brother-in-law wait, work, live anywhere and anyhow to make the Calumet mine succeed — and then help the men to a share of it. . . . Men are not going to fight to keep the corporations which they direct. They will quietly sell out and leave the direction to others, who lack knowledge and character. Why not? We have seen it done and shall see more of it, if the yells go on; and in case the courts are fooled with by ignorant people, the corporations will suffer injustice. Theodore understand these things as little as Taft or Wilson. *I* should not think of pushing Taft, and do think them all three unfit. . . . I like all these candidates — especially T. R. — and would rather vote for neither. . . .

As a matter of fact, he voted for Wilson, and became a very frequent and copious correspondent of the President. Of the many topics which they discussed, the matter of interlocking directorates may be selected as typical. It will be observed that even in 1914 Henry Higginson retained his conviction of 1867, that "any well-trained business man" was wiser than the Congress and the Executive. He writes to Charles W. Eliot: —

*December 15, 1914.*

DEAR MR. ELIOT: —

. . . I have a letter from President Wilson, a copy of which I enclose. As you see, he sets up a doctrine which seems wrong. I wrote to him about the attacks on the interlocking directorates, as he had spoken of them, and about the great difficulty of getting directors at all if they are threatened with fines or imprisonment for being in corporations where mistakes

are made. No director can know all that goes on in his corporation, and men do not care very much to be directors if they are threatened. Further than that, a man may very well be in two or three corporations that help each other and that work together, and be much more serviceable than if these directorships were divided among three or four men. In short, the interlocking directorate idea [*i.e.*, forbidding it] seems to me often foolish. The President writes that the law is made for the men who do not go straight, and that is the point which seems to me wrong. . . .

A law directing how business corporations shall be carried on should assume that it is dealing with honest men, put proper restrictions on the acts of honest men, and trust them. The President does not trust them, nor does Congress. My own opinion is that the business men are far more to be trusted than the men in public life, as a rule. I am grieved that President Wilson does not see that a law covering a deal of ground should not be made simply to trip up great rogues. . . .

President Wilson is trying to do good in many ways, and has already accomplished much. I like the change in the tariff; I should like the income tax if it were properly imposed and guarded, and if decent arrangements were made with regard to its collection. The collection of it is as clumsy and as costly as possible. In our office alone last year we spent \$20,000 for various people in doing the needed work. Any well-trained business man could have shown Secretary McAdoo and the President the easy way to do things, and the result would have brought in more money and a great deal less temper. . . .

The trouble with the Democratic party and the President is that they do not know how to do business, they are not willing to learn from business men, and they are willing to assume that their [own] methods are better, and that they are honest. Any fairly well-educated business man knows that both claims are ridiculous.

Every now and then I write to Mr. Wilson, and always get a very pleasant reply. . . .

The letter from the President was as follows:—

THE WHITE HOUSE, WASHINGTON

*December 10, 1914.*

*Personal*

MY DEAR MAJOR:—

Your letters always stimulate me, and I thank you sincerely for yours of December seventh.

I think I realize, perhaps too keenly for a man of action, that there are two sides to every question, and sometimes two sides of almost equal weight. I know, therefore, the inconveniences and drawbacks arising from the enforcement of some of our recently enacted laws; but, after all, laws have to be made for those who do not go straight, and undoubtedly there has been a very wide-spread abuse of interlocking directorates and of the many other arrangements by which men are permitted to arrange, not only their own business, but the business of those with whom they are dealing. After all, the best that the law can do is to thread its way carefully amidst difficulties and be careful to keep on the right side of some obvious line.

Cordially and sincerely yours,

WOODROW WILSON.

Four days later, Mr. Higginson stated his views once more to President Eliot, with increasing dissatisfaction with the political situation:—

*December 19, 1914.*

. . . As to the interlocking directorates, I have no doubt that there has been some trouble from them, and in many cases they should be avoided. May it not be more safely left to the business men, to the business sense of the community,

to correct that evil? And when we are considering, should not we consider all the great advantages that come from interlocking directorates? My trouble with Mr. Wilson and his Cabinet is that they do not understand how business should be done, and of course some of the methods of the past fifty years have not been sound.

I agree entirely with what you say about the income tax, for it is a great deal better that everybody should feel the pressure. Mr. Wilson, so far as I am concerned, is ready to discuss things and is frank. . . .

The farmer is the bottom stone in our country and every other country. You and I blush when we see that our spring wheat averages eleven bushels to the acre and England, Germany and France raise twenty-five to thirty-five bushels to the acre. We are a slovenly people.

I sympathize with the efforts of the Wilson Administration to curb some of the great powers, but in doing so they have frightened people to such an extent that they will not undertake what they should undertake. They do not wish to go to jail, they do not wish to be fined, they do not wish to be published, and, not knowing what they may do, in many cases they do nothing. It is not good for the nation, it is not good for the laborer, it is not good for anybody. . . .

He continued to write at great length to President Wilson, — as he did to Secretary McAdoo and other members of the Cabinet, — and invariably received his "very pleasant reply." But on September 7, 1915, he confides to Senator Lodge: "You know how far my words will go with him [the President] — that is, no distance at all."

Upon the whole, as the foregoing correspondence makes clear, Major Higginson approached politics from the angle of economics. His article on "Justice to the Corporations" ("Atlantic Monthly," January, 1908) repeats his customary defense of the "enterprising, able, thoughtful men" who

have built up the corporations — with illustrations drawn from the record of his own associates. He concludes that "The Nation and our legislation can safely trust the ruling Wall Street men. . . . Cease all hard words about the corporations and capitalists."

This was a brave and sincere argument, but one not calculated to convince the skeptical, or to soothe the bitter sufferers from social injustice. This is clear from the seventeen replies printed by "The Survey" for February 7, 1914, to Higginson's article, "Consider the Other Fellow," in the same issue of that magazine. The "other fellow" was the abused capitalist, whom the Major defended loyally. The replies were courteous, but two sentences from Dr. Crothers summed up a fundamental divergence in view. "It does not follow," wrote Dr. Crothers, "that, because a man has shown great ability in the accumulation of wealth, he is a good judge of what is best for the masses of the people. The people have begun to insist upon judging for themselves."

These printed articles in defense of corporations are distinctly more conservative than some of Major Higginson's letters and conversations. He wrote to Mr. C. A. Coffin in 1911:—

. . . I also have certain views about corporate managements, which do not entirely agree with those of other people. I do think that the corporations have been rather too eager, just as certain rich men have. It is perfectly natural in the struggle to succeed, and still more in the effort not to fail, — as we (G. E.) came near doing in '93, in the desire to do good work, and to prevent others doing mischief, — that we should have become too eager, and have forgotten other people who are either stupid or inefficient; and we sometimes forget our workmen or our competitors. I do not believe that, because a man owns property, it belongs to him to do with as he pleases. The property belongs to the community, and he has charge

of it, and can dispose of or use it, if it is well done and not with sole regard to himself or to his stockholders. If you will think a little while, perhaps you will agree that my views are not radical, or rather revolutionary at all; it is merely injecting morals and religion into daily life — and they belong there, and form a part of our conduct, and must guide us. . . .

He addressed some college students, at this period, in the same vein:—

. . . Pray bear in mind that any large work which you build up, be it a factory or a railroad or anything else, is not yours absolutely. It has been done for the world and done with the help of the world, which has after all aided you and given you your education. No matter how large a work you have done, it belongs to the world in a measure; and the more you can draw your helpers to your side, the more you can make them feel that it is "our" mill or railroad, and not "mine" alone, the stronger you will stand. . . .

Major Higginson had written to Professor Taussig, as early as 1894, "We must meet the social questions more than half way, or be beaten." Yet he never ceased to think that the "economists and the regulators" were unfair toward the capitalists who were willing to take risks. He wrote to Professor Taussig on March 16, 1913:—

DEAR TAUSSIG:—

An old man gets up early, for he has little time to spare — a few months or years at the best. It is 7 o'clk Sunday A.M. I have been reading the records of the American Economic Society last autumn, and note your remarks and those of Carver, as well as others. In a discussion of prices for necessities, and especially public-service corporations and their just reward or return, not a word is said of the fool who risks

and loses money in sundry experiments, and who succeeds in a few. Hear my sad tale: I have been putting money into a well-studied experiment to make magnetic iron out of ore at a much lower cost than at present. With several friends, I have spent \$60,000 or more. It is a failure. If it had been a success, it would have reduced the cost of pig-iron or magnetic steel four or five dollars a ton.

Think of that for the world!

Next: I am doing the same with a new battery, and that question is not yet solved.

Next: I am doing the same with a process for making alcohol from chips, and probably that will succeed.

A lot of us took up the Submarine Signal Company some twenty years ago, and have spent \$1,750,000 of real money on it. The company is eminently successful, but never has made a penny of return; it has saved lots of lives and property, and the whole joy of it is in that fact. That \$1,750,000 twenty years ago with interest would amount to about \$6,000,000 at the present time.

Some idiots — . . . Bill Forbes, Cochrane, Vail and I — risked our money on the Telephone in a dream of '76 or '78. . . . This time it was "trumps" — and think of the blessing to the world!

Some unwise men bought Calumet shares in 1865, sweated terribly until 1870, and then got a dividend. Many of them were afraid to acknowledge the ownership of these shares. The mine has paid about \$120,000,000 in dividends.

I have a string more of these things if they are of any interest. Almost every railroad in the country has failed because built too soon, and the original men have lost their money. I bought Chicago and Northwestern at six dollars, and Jersey Central at about the same. The latter is in the three hundreds, and Chicago and Northwest has been over \$200. . . .

If our country is to grow, through developments, the "econ-

omists" and the "regulators" must allow for the losses in risks, else we shall get behind countries which do allow for brains, character and ability; that is, they must allow for extra dividends. I certainly have got rid of \$500,000 in experiments — and I am about as much of a fool as most men, and no more. . . .

Carver speaks of vanity as a motive, and he is right in a way. What does our office care for and work for most? — vanity — that is, the name of selling only reliable goods; and, to reach this point, it must study and spend a great deal of money. Every now and then it makes a mistake and has to pay for it by lifting lame enterprises out of the mud or carrying them through a panic. This firm has been in existence about sixty-five years, and certainly has lost some millions of money in lifting and carrying; and also to gratify the vanity of never failing to pay a loan on time, and getting ready to do so a month beforehand. Long live vanity, *i.e.*, character!

The "regulators" leave this sort of thing out of their calculations — that is, the determination to win by deserts, and keep character. It is the one and only sure asset and is worth the whole world. . . .

Of course, if we had better public officers, we might get better results out of regulations, but we should also lose our own sense of responsibility and of thought as to our own actions. . . . But public ownership is the greatest folly extant. You or I can run a railroad or a factory better than can our State House or any of its inhabitants.

But, to return to my beginning: when the economists are reckoning the large profits made on this or t'other transaction, let them also reckon the mistakes. Somehow or other, the Lord made us, and allows us to make mistakes, and he brings the thing out pretty even. . . .

If we insist that the leading men of the Nation shall behave more quietly and generously to their fellows, we shall, by slow degrees, build up a better sentiment, so that men shall be

ashamed of many things which to-day may be done, just exactly as business men will not now venture to do things which they did freely thirty or forty years ago.

If you were not the best fellow in the world, I should not bother you with such a long screed, but I cannot help watching you and Carver and listening to you. . . .

Professor Taussig replied, March 20, 1913:—

"You are absolutely right. Risks and losses must be reckoned as well as prizes. Every real investment of capital involves risks, and the rate of return necessary to induce lending by the man who is virtually guaranteed against losses is by no means sufficient to induce the actual investment by the man who gives the guaranty. It is perfectly true that the general public too often wants to eat its cake and have it too; or, to put it in other words, wants to play the game, heads we win and tails you lose. When an enterprise is in its inception, the immense majority will have nothing to do with it; when that same enterprise happens to have been carried through the period of risk and difficulty to the stage of success, that same majority wants a handsome share of the profits. . . .

"If you have nothing to do *next* Sunday morning at 7 o'clock, turn to a certain work by a Harvard Professor on the 'Principles of Economics,' and look at volume II, pages 90-91 and 93-94, also page 467. You will see the element of risk is not entirely neglected by the economist. . . .

"Nevertheless, I believe it is true that in a considerable class of ventures the stage is being reached at which the losses will be *very much* outweighed by the gains, if there be no sort of public regulation. I quite admit that public regulation, administered by the kind of public officials we get too often, is a dangerous thing. I suspect the bow just now is being pulled too taut the other way; but some degree of oversight, and of curtailment of gains unnecessarily high, must be faced. . . ."

Major Higginson's most effective preaching on public affairs, however, was not in the field of politics, or of economics in the narrow sense, but rather in the discussion of the obligations of rich men to the community. Here he had the immense advantage that lay in the public's knowledge that he practised exactly what he preached. His "Hint to the Rich," published in the "Atlantic" for March, 1911, was the most widely discussed of all his utterances. He had long been aware, of course, of what he called, in a letter to Charles A. Coffin in 1905, the insolent power of money: "Anyone who has the luck to gain money must feel the insolent power of it and the misuse of it in giving it away. So a person of any modesty often prefers to hide the name of the giver. I lie about it now and then." He began the "Atlantic" article with one of his favorite quotations, the motto cut on the gravestone of Edward Courtenay, Earl of Devonshire:—

What I gave, I have;  
What I spent, I had;  
What I kept, I lost.

After defining "success" as service, and illustrating it, as was his wont, by the ideals of some of his friends, he admits the existence of envy and jealousy among the crowd. "The man who has not made speed in the race thinks hardly of his favored mate. He forgets the self-control, the ceaseless toil, the constant thought which his old companion has used, while he has gone to a ball game or a bar or simply smoked his pipe after a day of work. He ignores the differences in ability. He forgets, too, the failures which may have preceded success." Yet it is these strong "enterprisers" who have built up the country and enriched themselves. Let them now seek contentment and peace of mind by aiding others, and especially by giving to the cause of education, "the key-stone of civilization." The rich man should give away all his fortune during his lifetime. Examples of such generosity "would soothe

men's minds and counteract the sense of injustice." The best social insurance would be this sense of mutual good-will.

There were many replies to this article. Representatives of "labor" made the obvious retort that the splendid generosityes of a Rockefeller and a Carnegie had not soothed in the least "the sense of injustice" over the economic conditions that had made the Rockefeller and Carnegie fortunes possible. Even Major Higginson's English friend, William R. Malcolm, a partner in the Coutts banking house, makes a keen criticism of Higginson's thesis:—

LONDON, May 4, 1911.

. . . I return your copy of the "Atlantic Monthly" with your article, which is very interesting. As an exhortation to the rich, it is very useful and I fancy would apply more to your country than to Britain, because I believe the general diffusion of wealth is greater here than with you. I wish that the rich in both countries were more and more penetrated with the spirit you inculcate. It is an expression of the true spirit of Christianity. But I doubt whether you can look to it to allay the spirit of discontent among the poor at present. There is jealousy of the power which wealth places in a man's hands quite as much as of the possession and inequality of wealth. The rich man says, "I will do this or that good work with my wealth"; but after all it is *he* who does it and orders it.

Of course there ought to be Charity and Christianity of feeling among the poor towards the rich, as well as *vice versa*, and this ought to lead them to appreciate the work of the rich on their behalf; but we can hardly look for this at present. I think we must work for a better general distribution of wealth leading to fewer rich and fewer poor. Free Trade and graduated Income Tax will do something in this direction. If we could raise the bulk of the people to a condition of independence and tolerable prosperity, the antagonism of classes would vanish. . . .

But Major Higginson was unconvinced. At the annual dinner of the Carnegie Institution at Washington, on December 15, 1911, he asked leave to speak, and in one of the most earnest and skillful of all of his addresses urged Mr. Carnegie to even more lavish generosities: "I for one should be glad to see him carry out his expressed wish to die a poor man, but this is impossible. He may strip himself of his pennies, but he will live and die rich in blessings." One of his fellow trustees wrote thus about the address:—

"I am not going to let this occasion go by without the personal satisfaction of now saying what was in my mind when I was listening to the noble and characteristic words you spoke the other evening in Washington. You addressed your words to Carnegie and the company, and they evidently were most effective — but the man who embodied all that you held up for a copy was yourself; you have done all that you invite others to do — and have done it with a simplicity and sincerity which add a quality to the giving, of higher worth even than the generous gifts themselves. One of the crowning satisfactions of my life has been my association with you — and the fact that you call me friend. May I long see that face and hear that welcome voice."

As one reflects upon the number and variety of Major Higginson's appearances before the public, both as speaker and as writer, after he had passed his seventy-fifth birthday, the more amazing seems this record of physical and mental energy. Instead of slowing down, as men usually do, he speeded up. He writes chaffingly to Senator Lodge on March 21, 1911:—

DEAR CABOT:—

I suppose you think you are an orator, but just look at me! I am to preside at Dr. Grenfell's meeting this afternoon, and make a beautiful speech; I am to go to a performance of a dramatic association and make a beautiful speech; am to

speak at the Harvard Club in New York next week, and am employed to write for the newspapers obituaries, etc. — and you are not in it with me. To be sure, people like to hear what you have to say, and they do not care about my words, but they seek me, and they pass you by. When I made my first speech at Cambridge about the Soldiers Field, Charles Perkins warned me against orating, and he was right; and it was a sad day for me and for all my hearers. . . . I am going to Europe on the 5th of April, in the Mauretania. . . .

He had become a Boston "institution." Newspapers liked to interview him. The curiosity of the American public about any rich man is insatiable, and Major Higginson usually found something picturesque and forcible to say to a reporter. He attended "hearings" on all sorts of public questions. He served on endless committees and boards. His shrewdness and humor and record as a fighter made him admired by the masses of his fellow citizens of Boston — over three fourths of whom, by 1900, were of foreign parentage. This old army officer knew precisely how to "hit it off" with Irishman and Hebrew, negro and Italian. They spoke of him as a "blue-blood," and properly enough; but they had the instinct to see that he belonged to what Carlyle called the "working aristocrats." He was fond of saying that "the workman ought to have a bigger piece of pie"; and though he was disinclined to pass the workman the knife and ask him to help himself, the laboring men of Boston would nevertheless cheer for Major Higginson when they would cheer for no one else. They knew that he meant to play fair, though he played by the old rules.

There is one clause of the Book of Common Prayer which Major Higginson could never have repeated with much uncision: "Grant us minds always contented with our present condition." "Schiff told me," he wrote President Eliot, "that he was content, and wished nothing more. I do not believe in sympathizing with that mood, unless it is for money. Why

be content?" And he wrote in the same vein to Miss Ruth Draper: "This eternal progress and regress and progress again seems to be the most cheering thing in our lives here. I've always been saying to myself, '*What next? Come, move on. This is good, but what next?*' How can we be ever content?"

Yet, though contentment was denied him, the decade from 1904 to 1914 brought him much happiness. He had occasional illnesses, it is true, and some keen anxieties. His circle of intimates was broken more than once by death. Mrs. Charles Russell Lowell died in 1906. The deaths of Alexander Agassiz and William James in 1910 were followed by that of James J. Higginson in 1911. "Major 'Jim' Higginson is so straight that he leans backward," it used to be said in Wall Street. He was the first of George Higginson's children to pass away, and he was seventy-five. Merry and modest to the last, a prosperous banker, the President of the Harvard Club of New York, his name still brings an affectionate smile to the faces of the men who knew him.

Major Higginson's relations with old and new friends were never more delightful than in this decade. "Rock Harbor"—his summer home in Westport on Lake Champlain—was filled with a succession of lively house-parties. The Higginsons captured many friends as they were going or returning from the Adirondacks, and the "Putnam camp," not far away, gave them agreeable companions. Two stout volumes of "Rock Harbor Journals" keep the record of the house guests for thirty years—with poems and sketches that are full of gayety and charm, but are too intimate for transcription here. "Sunset Hill" at Manchester was likewise known for its gracious hospitality. It was a "House of Kinsfolk," as the Russians say, but it welcomed also many a stranger.

Some of Major Higginson's most faithful friends were Englishmen: John White, Esq., General Sir George Higginson (a kinsman), Sir William Farrer, William R. Malcolm, Esq., and in later years Mr. Higginson's partner, Sir Hugh Levick.

He repeated at intervals his visits to hospitable country houses in England. He had many friendly correspondents on the Continent, particularly among musicians and artists, and great French and German bankers. His own marriage had helped to make him something of a cosmopolitan in feeling, and after the Hague Conferences he had for a while a strong hope of some form of world-organization that would lessen the chances of war.

Nothing is more charming in his correspondence of those years than the letters from old companions, looking back upon the past. Professor Basil L. Gildersleeve, the great Greek scholar of Johns Hopkins, who had first met Higginson when they were fellow students in Berlin in 1853, wrote on October 21, 1911:—

BALTIMORE.

DEAR MAJOR HIGGINSON:—

As soon as my daughter<sup>1</sup> arrived, she gave me your letter, which I was glad to receive as a birthday gift at her dear hands rather than by the common carrier. Our paths in life have had three significant crossings, in Berlin, in Cambridge, in New Haven, at the Bendemann dinner, then more than forty years afterwards at Lane's funeral, at the Yale Bicentennial; times of aspiration, of sorrow, of honor. Well, it gives me unfeigned pleasure to be told that in your eyes my long career seems to match that first success which appealed so strongly to your youthful imagination; and as for the younger of the two young men, whatever your hopes and aims were in 1853, you can now say with Victor Hugo, "J'ai fait ce que j'ai pu, j'ai servi"; and when I think what you have been able to do and what high service you have rendered, no life seems to me better worth living than yours has been.

With sincere thanks and best wishes, I am

Yours faithfully

BASIL L. GILDERSLEEVE.

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Gardiner M. Lane.

Horace Howard Furness,<sup>1</sup> the Shakespeare scholar, had written in 1901:—

. . . Our circle seemed once so large, and now it is dwindled down to but little more than you and Blight and me — oh, for a moment I forgot Binney, with whom I still keep in touch, and who seems still to bear a charmed life.

Indeed, indeed, but I was disappointed over missing you when I was in Boston town. What would n't I give for good old gossip with you. I think we should behave like fools. I know I should. Do you remember a way you had of suddenly plumping on the floor with a force that would jar any frame-built house in New England? — and then how we'd all roar with laughter! O time! what times! And do you remember the exalted pride with which you sent me from Vienna a hair of your moustache to prove its extraordinary growth? I'd not swear I have n't that hair yet. Is it not written in the book of Fate, dear boy, that we shall meet and have a good wholesome laugh over those days long syne, and not postpone it to the fields of asphodel? And, Johnny's<sup>2</sup> gone! he whom we all looked on, after Charley Lowell, as the man of genius in our class (you know we all claimed you as of *our* class of '54). "I feel chilly and grown old." But your affectionate letter warms me. Do it again — when the spirit prompts. But whether it prompt or not I shall, all the same, remain *in secula seculorum*,

Yours affectionately

HORACE HOWARD FURNESS.

His last letter, undated, but not long before his death in 1912, ends thus:—

<sup>1</sup> "He was the last of my mates to call me 'Higgy.' In college he was merry, earnest, studious, warm — but one would not have guessed his fine career. After the war and years more, I went to his office. He looked at me and did not know me. I smiled, and he said, 'Dear me! Your smile in your eyes tells me. It is Higgy!' Thank God for such friends." — H. L. H. to B. P., June 7, 1919.

<sup>2</sup> John C. Bancroft.

. . . Before long, when balmy spring days visit us earlier than they do you, then, oh, then do you and Ida just come hither and let us live over again some of the old days and gossip till the cock is crowing aloof. I live very quietly, and 't will be a lettered day of the very brightest red if you'll only come.

It's long past midnight and I must creep upstairs. Inasmuch as I remember Ida when she was a little girl, with her hair brought round in a braid above her forehead, playing with the Felton children, I think I may venture to send my love. Withhold it if you wish, but don't repress your own huge share from

Yours ever and ever and the day after,

HORACE HOWARD FURNESS.

One of Colonel Charles Francis Adams's last letters to Higginson surveys both their lives stoically: —

*January 12, 1912.*

. . . You say of yourself that you regard your own life as "a miserable patchwork." It would by no means be so regarded generally, or from the outside. The only difference between a successful man and a failure is, as old John L. Gardner remarked, years and years ago, that the successful man is mistaken only two times out of five, and the unsuccessful man is mistaken three times out of five. Few men, I take it, ever got to our point in life without looking back, and, in view of the mistakes they have made, wondering that they ever got through at all. I am sure it has been so in my own case. As I review it, my mistakes in life were fully three out of five. The only thing was that I was lucky enough to have the two out of five which were not mistakes redeem the other three. What I have accomplished, as compared with what I ought to have accomplished, seems to me a very patchy sort of outcome. However, as Bob Stevenson very sensibly remarked, it is for us only to "thank God it is no worse." . . .

Among Henry Adams's last notes to Higginson is this undated one from Paris, whither he had gone "a seeker of the Lord, praying for light; a worm crawling towards the asphalt in a spring rain; a pilgrim, very seasick, looking for the harbor of Paris":—

*Wedy. noon*

23 AVENUE DU BOIS DE BOULOGNE

MY DEAR HENRY:—

I will come for you at any time, to take you wherever you wish to go,—shopping, sight-seeing, visiting, to drive or to feed,—if you will fix an hour, and let me know by any legal form of notification,—except the telephone, which I have not. But I fear it will bore you if I insist. I am old, decrepit and a bore, and pride myself on being it all to the full, with some few additions; so don't be shy. I on my part, concede nothing whatever to the insolence of youth, so be on your guard.

Ever yrs.

HENRY ADAMS.

Henry Higginson kept faith with the living, but the key to this long story of his usefulness as a citizen and public servant is the singular and noble fashion in which he sought to keep faith with the dead. He wrote to his wife in 1865: "You do not know how much I miss Charley and Stephen and Jim too. They constantly come before me." When Emerson's house was burned, and his friends, unknown to him, subscribed money to rebuild it, one contribution was marked, "In memory of Charles Russell Lowell and Stephen Perkins." "That," says Emerson's son, "was from H. L. H." It was the same H. L. H. who wrote in November, 1914, to James Ford Rhodes:

. . . We need more true democracy, true fellowship between man and man and more wish to serve our fellows, for on it depends religion, morality, the usefulness and happiness of life — God's blessing, else why are we here? It was our youthful doctrine and it wears well. Why feel a faith and not

try to live according to it? If my nearest and dearest playmates had lived, they would have tried to help their fellows, and as they had gone before us, the greater the need for me to try — and the many tasks are still before us — and still very incomplete. As for you, dear friend, your especial task has been nobly fulfilled and what better task can a man take up? . . .

And once more, in May, 1918, to C. W. Barron: —

. . . I have never cared about money for its own sake, have had the good luck to get considerable, and have spent of it as well as I could. It is n't bread and butter we want half as much as it is pleasant, friendly relations with our fellow creatures; and if we did nothing for them, did n't hold out our hands to them, did n't foster the real democratic spirit, not of excess but of real charity and kindness, I think we have missed our ends. . . . Mind you, I have n't changed my views since I was twenty. These views were held by half a dozen of the ablest, most thoughtful, really brilliant men of my day, and with me they have only grown and deepened. These men are all dead, and I am their heir, as it were, to these ideas. I might make four times the money I now have, but I would not change on any account. . . .

All this tested fidelity to an ideal was in the minds of the three hundred men who gathered in the Copley-Plaza Hotel on November 18, 1914, to celebrate Major Higginson's eightieth birthday. There was also a dinner in his honor at the Tavern Club, and a reception at the Harvard Club of Boston, of which Major Higginson was likewise President. But the dinner at the Copley-Plaza, presided over by Henry Cabot Lodge, was the final seal of approbation of a great private citizen and public servant. The Symphony Orchestra played, and the Apollo Club sang. Letters were read from

President Eliot, President Lowell, William Howard Taft, Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes, Seth Low, and Charles Francis Adams. There were speeches by Bishop Lawrence, George W. Chadwick, William Roscoe Thayer, and General Stephen M. Weld. Mr. Higginson, the final speaker, had prepared a response, but as he rose and faced the long-continued applause, he found himself unable to speak more than a few sentences of gratitude. Yet he repeated what he called "the keynote of my faith": "*From my boyhood I have had a deep and passionate wish that we should live according to our highest ideals.*" The phrases were simple enough, and brief and broken, but in that company there was really no need for any words at all. What was eloquent was the gallant figure, the sabre-marked face, the passionate, wistful desire for service, and the record of eighty years.

## CHAPTER XIV

### THE WORLD WAR

Du hast sie zerstört  
Die schöne Welt.

— GOETHE, *Faust*.

Only a sweet and virtuous soul,  
Like season'd timber, never gives;  
But though the whole world turn to coal,  
Then chiefly lives.

— GEORGE HERBERT, *Virtue*.

YET if Henry Higginson could have been wafted to the skies upon those clouds of incense burned in honor of his eightieth birthday, his life would have been incomplete. The fifth act of the drama, bringing the ultimate test of heroic hardihood, had indeed already begun.

On the very morning after the birthday celebration, Major Higginson had to look financial ruin in the face. In his preoccupation with public affairs during those opening months of the World War, he was unaware of the state of his personal accounts. He had lived through many an "agony" of the market, in 1873, in 1893, and in 1907; but those anxieties were nothing when compared with this imminence of insolvency. It was there, stark and pitiless, like a reef looming suddenly through the fog. He "came about," as a laboring ship might, just in time and with nothing to spare. He was a proud man and kept silence. A friend quietly assumed the burden of carrying the Orchestra, insisting that this fact should not be known. Gradually Mr. Higginson's affairs straightened themselves, and the sky was clear again at his death. But those persons who thought that his failure to fulfill his long-cherished plan of endowing the Orchestra was due to pique over

the Muck incident, were very far out of the way. When Major Higginson's will was drawn in 1918, he could not possibly, after making suitable provision for his family, have carried out his earlier purpose of leaving a million to the Orchestra. He had already spent upon the Orchestra alone considerably more than that sum, without reckoning any of his other countless benefactions. His precept that "the rich man should give away all of his fortune during his lifetime" was more literally followed in his own case than the public ever realized.<sup>1</sup>

The fifth act of this life-drama, then, opens with one of those reversals of fortune dear to the Tragic Muse. But the final years of Henry Higginson's career were not to be a tragedy. His pride was wounded, his mind was troubled, some of his purposes were foiled, and his friendship was betrayed, but through it all he remained unbeaten.

I was ever a fighter, so — one fight more,  
The best and the last!

To realize the full extent of the difficulties facing him we must now go back from the birthday feast of November to the tragic days of early August. Brief passages from several letters make his personal attitude toward the conflict unmistakably clear. On August 3, 1914, he wrote to Senator Weeks:—

MY DEAR SENATOR:—

In these horrible times, may I say a word?

I am really astonished to find the unanimity and strong feeling about the German Emperor. Everybody speaks of him with horror and hatred for his cruelty in the matter of this war, which hurts everybody in the world. It looks like insanity, of which he has at times been accused, and certainly no one can call him sane if he wishes to fight the world.

<sup>1</sup> The inventory of his estate, filed in May, 1921, shows, however, that at the time of his death his holdings of personal property were more valuable than he supposed.

I am hoping that England will take a strong hand in this game, and help smash him; but, if England is in any need, I think we ought to take hold. If in any contingency the German Emperor should succeed, he would make for us next, and we don't want to fight him single-handed, though, as I feel to-day, I should be glad of the chance. We ought to do everything that we can for the good of the side opposed to the German Emperor, and I see no reason why we should not express publicly our detestation of his conduct. Perhaps this is not in conformity with diplomatic usages, but it looks like the death-grapple of an unprincipled man, who would rule the world for his own good and glory and that of his nation, and who will not consider anybody else. How far his pernicious influence goes, whether he has friends in this country, is hard to say. . . .

Two days later, he wrote to Mr. J. P. Morgan (the younger):—

. . . As an old man, and a friend of your father and of the house, I venture to trouble you with these lines. . . . It is cheering to see the English take the matter in hand so quietly and so resolutely, and personally I wish that we should go in too and help the English, for this man [the Kaiser] is an enemy to the world. If he is sane, he ought to be removed, and if he is insane, he ought to be locked up. Horrible as the destruction of property will be, and destruction of life, and almost worse, the maiming of many men and women, is the terrible temper which has been aroused. . . . However, there is more manhood in keeping your shirt on and making other people steady their nerves than there is in any amount of fighting. . . .

The feeling expressed in that last sentence is repeated in two short newspaper articles that Major Higginson wrote in the hope of steadyng public feeling, which was already fearful of

a financial panic. In neither article does he betray his own sympathy for the Allies.

We have good crops and quiet homes, and we have the great barrier of the Atlantic Ocean between us and this terrible war. As men, we cannot forget the passions and sufferings of the fighting nations, but we can go on quietly. Nothing helps more in life than cheerfulness, and we Americans have the right and the duty to be cheerful. — Boston "Herald," August 7, 1914.

We are not responsible for the war — we could do nothing to prevent it; we have simply to see it through and keep our equilibrium and *keep sawing wood*. — Boston "Globe," August 11, 1914.

But in his private letters he confesses his bewilderment. "I can't get to anything decent," he writes to Mrs. George R. Agassiz on August 20, "can't get at the result to anyone here in America. It upsets all business and all calculations." He was quite aware that the traditional policy of the United States called for non-interference in European affairs.<sup>1</sup> He approved, like most of our citizens at the time, the President's proclamation of neutrality, as conforming to our traditions, and necessary to the "proper performance of our duty as the one great nation at peace, the one people holding itself ready to play a part of impartial mediation."

Yet his letter of August 27, to Richard S. Guinness, of the London house of Higginson and Co., makes a clear distinction between our national policy and his personal mood: —

<sup>1</sup> In both conferences at The Hague, in 1899 and 1907, we reaffirmed this policy. As our delegates signed the first convention in regard to arbitration, they read into the minutes this statement: "Nothing contained in this convention shall be so construed as to require the United States of America to depart from its traditional policy of not intruding upon, interfering with, or entangling itself in the political questions or policy or internal administration of any foreign State; nor shall anything contained in the said convention be construed to imply a relinquishment by the United States of America of its traditional attitude toward purely American questions."

DEAR RICHARD:—

This morning I see in some paper that England would like to have the active sympathy of America. Naturally, our country must stand neutral, and one reason lies in the fact that perhaps we can act as a mediator, and if we take sides, we cannot do this well. I suppose that was Sir Edward Grey's attitude with regard to the impending war, before the crisis came. At any rate, it is the attitude which the Government has taken, and sane men think it is right. I am *not* sane, and wish that our country should soon declare its sympathy, if such sympathy is required to throw the Germans back. As regards the feeling of men and women whom I see, it is as strongly on your side as human thought and feeling can make it. Men are as hot as pepper, and women hotter still. . . . As I see it, if he [the Kaiser] succeeds and is not permanently beaten down in some way, the world is not a fit place to live in. The world has got on too far in the direction of a reasonable democracy to allow any autocrat to talk and act as the Emperor does. He has kindled an enormous enthusiasm in the German people for the German country, but it seems to me that in doing so he has lighted a fire which is burning up a great many of the German people; in short, it is the nation against its inhabitants. . . . I would not have any Englishman whom I know, or even do not know, think that we are not on your side, and I told you yesterday that, if it were left to me, I would put our navy in and send over half a million troops. Indeed, I feel like encouraging our people to go across the line and enlist in the Canadian regiments, and I have no doubt a great many will go. . . .

Two long letters to Colonel E. M. House, both dated September 1, 1914, show Mr. Higginson's feelings after the first month of warfare.

. . . England has been caught at a disadvantage; the same is true of France. Nobody thought that the German Emperor

would do what he has done, and I don't care a fig whether he brought the war on or whether he is to blame; he could have stopped it; he has made it; and he will be held guilty of the deed in the future. He has prepared this machine for years, and it is a wonderful machine. His officers have been drinking to "the day" for years, and we know perfectly well what he meant to do. He has brought a ruin on the world that is inconceivable. If he should succeed, we would come next. He will be sure to order us about. He may take Canada by treaty; he may go into South America; and we have no use for him nor his ideas this side of the water. I think our Navy should be kept in first-class order, and if I were President of the United States, I would see that it is used in convoying provision ships across the water, letting all the English ships go free to attend to their own affairs. Our Army should be carried to the full number, and I do think that the German system of everything in connection with the army should be studied, and our officers fully instructed in it. This may seem wild, and I should have said it was, a month ago; but I have lived in Europe, we have a house in Europe, we have close connections with it; I have known the Germans and the Austrians well, for I lived among them six or seven years. I have a letter from one of the great bankers there, written a week before the war, in which he said he did not think there would be any war between Germany and France and Russia — and yet it came. Mind you, he is one of the men who ought to have been informed by the German officials. Our turn will come next. We can do this: we can express our strong disapproval of various acts of the German army, and we can show our sympathy for the other side. If England were smashed, we should have lost our only real ally in this world. I think these things need consideration. . . . Nobody has a higher respect for the President, his motives, his actions, than I have. . . . When I think that the German Ambassador allows himself to talk as he does now, — declare that the victory is won, and that it is won in the cause of Democracy, — I wonder if I under-

stand the English language. This war is a war between Aristocracy, Autocracy, and Democracy, and you and I belong on one side, and cannot say it too loud or too often. . . .

In the second letter he urges Colonel House to use his influence with the President in favor of a move for peace.

. . . There is but one man who can move to advantage in this whole matter, and that is President Wilson. As the head of a great nation, which represents many more nations, he can fairly say to the European warring nations: "You showed your courage; you showed power; now just stop, and make peace. You are doing much to bankrupt yourselves; you are injuring the whole world greatly. Our workmen are suffering because of the disturbance; if ours are suffering, yours are suffering ten-fold. You are setting yourselves back a great many years and you are wasting the substance for which you worked so hard. Stop now; make terms, and try to keep the peace." Whether the exact moment for this has arrived, I certainly cannot say, but it would seem to me, after much consideration, that the President at least could express our belief and wishes in the matter. . . . Mr. Wilson's attitude and that of the nation has been excellent, and yet, as you know, with very few exceptions, everybody is on the side of the Allies. . . . Will you take up these matters with the President? There is really no time to be lost. I have seen a good many strange times, but you and I have never seen anything equal to the present time, and once more, there is no occasion for it. It can do nobody any good, neither Germany, England, France, Russia, Austria, nor any other nation, and it is daily and hourly doing to these nations a great harm, and through them hurting the whole world. . . .

On September 10 he wrote again to Colonel House: "He [the President] has struck the right note about his duty and

about his proclamation for a day of prayer for peace, and he has gained power thereby."

In the meantime Major Higginson had been greatly concerned about the Orchestra. Dr. Muck had spent the summer of 1914 in Europe, as usual. It will be remembered that he was now in the middle of his second term as conductor, under a five-year engagement, which began in the fall of 1912. Charles A. Ellis, the manager of the orchestra, was also in Europe, engaging new players. On September 3 Major Higginson wrote to Mr. Ellis in London, begging him to lay all the difficulties of the situation before Dr. Muck.

. . . You know my knowledge of, association with, and liking for the German people, men and women whom I have known, and especially with the South Germans. You know how I have got along with the Germans of the Orchestra during all these years, and how I have managed, with your great help, to get the best musicians — at the head, and away down the line. You know how much I have cared to keep the Orchestra going, and raised it to the present point, and how I have hoped to make it last long after I die. We have at its head the man who seems to me the best musician in the world as conductor of an orchestra, and a man of the highest ideals as a musician and as a gentleman. For all these reasons, I want to put the matter clearly before you and before him.

The feeling here with regard to this war is entirely against the German Emperor, and not against the German people. Rightly or wrongly, our people believe that the Emperor could have stopped the war, even if he did not make it. They believe that he has prepared for this war during his whole lifetime. Further than that, I don't think the Prussians are much liked here, and he represents the Prussians. . . . This feeling does not pass over to the German people. . . . Now it is only fair that Dr. Muck shall understand the sentiment about himself: there is one feeling universally, and that is

great admiration and gratitude for the beautiful concerts he has given, and which the people hope he will continue to give. . . . I wish Dr. Muck to know the attitude of our country-people; and let me repeat that nobody will take any attitude toward him but that of the kindest, most cordial appreciation of him and all his work. He has never been received more warmly than he will be on his first appearance here this year; but also you and he will agree that the passions of men have been inflamed to a degree not seen in our lifetime. . . . Since the war began, it has seemed to me a very difficult problem for Dr. Muck to make all his men play together. I have doubted whether he would care to play at all unless he got his best men. . . . It is n't the lessened *numbers* but it is the lessened *quality* which I dread, and which may disturb Dr. Muck very much. You remember that we cannot get any outside musicians, for they are all in the Union. Perhaps some of them might be willing to leave for the season, but I greatly doubt it; and Dr. Muck will not try to live with the Union, nor will I. I have so great a respect for Dr. Muck and his qualities and his ideals that I wish him to know all these things. . . .

Before the month was over, however, Dr. Muck arrived in Boston, and it was determined that the concerts should proceed. At the first rehearsal, October 12, 1914, Major Higginson made the following address to the members of the Orchestra:—

GENTLEMEN:—

It is pleasant to see you all, and I offer to you my kind greeting and best wishes, and I welcome the newcomers to our orchestra.

Nearly sixty years ago I dreamed of this orchestra for the sake of art, and especially for the happiness and welfare of our people. For thirty-four years I have worked over it and,

by the aid of many able and distinguished artists, the Orchestra has been formed, and has reached its present point of excellence. I care very much for the Orchestra.

We meet again under difficult circumstances; we are of many nationalities, including Americans, and we all are on American soil, which is neutral. Therefore, we must use every effort to avoid all unpleasant words or looks, for our task is to make harmony above all things — harmony even in the most modern music. I expect only harmony in your relations to one another.

I had feared that we might not be able to give the concerts this year, because the presence of Dr. Muck and of many members seemed unlikely. We have lost only a few men, and have filled their places well. The public has urgently asked me again and again for the concerts, and my only reply has been that it depended upon circumstances, and that, in case of a general war, the contracts allowed me to give up the concerts if I were not satisfied with the members to be had. It seemed clear that, if one year passed without the concerts, we should hardly ever have the Orchestra again; for to bring together the old men, who might have sought positions elsewhere, and to get the new men needed, would be a great task, to which neither Dr. Muck nor I was equal. It has taken many years to make the Orchestra, and you can understand how many years it would take to rebuild it.

I have thought of you all as needing the work; I have thought of the beautiful concerts already given, and have thought of the people who wanted them; and, considering all these points, I wish to go on with the concerts.

The conditions of this year were against us, and it was our part as men to overcome these conditions if we could. Dr. Muck has done his best; Mr. Ellis and Mr. Brennan have done their best; and I ask your agreement to do your best and, under no circumstances, however trying, to do or say anything which may cause friction. You have to sit together for

rehearsals, for concerts, in the tuning-room, in the railroad trains, in the hotels while on journeys. Mutual forbearance and respect toward each other is absolutely indispensable. Without it the Orchestra cannot live.

You all have at heart the reputation of our Orchestra, which has achieved a fine name and which is known in Europe as well as here. It rests with you to keep that name bright, and to give to our public such concerts as we have had before.

In making this appeal for harmony among the artists, Major Higginson knew that consistency required that his own public utterances on the subject of the war should not rouse antagonism among the players. If "mutual forbearance and respect" were commended to them, certainly the founder of the Orchestra would be expected to conform to his own precepts. Very significant is his note to President Eliot, of October 16:—

. . . Long ago I should have expressed strongly my own opinion that, if England needs support, it is our bounden duty and our interest to help her in any and every way to the full extent of our power; but I must keep on good terms with the Orchestra, which plays this afternoon for the first time this season. I have counseled to these men of a dozen different nationalities moderation and kind treatment of one another. I really am sorry that I am not free. . . .

A month later, at the birthday dinner, it was Dr. Muck who proposed Major Higginson's health, on behalf of the Orchestra, and except for a passing remark by a single speaker, there was no reference whatsoever to the war which was already threatening Western civilization.

Throughout 1915 Major Higginson appeared seldom in public. He was terribly worried: first by the crisis in his personal affairs; then by the problem of keeping peace in

the Orchestra and thus keeping faith with its patrons; and by the defeats of the Allies. He was a proud man, and his financial difficulties were kept secret. He wrote to an intimate friend in February: "I promised my partners and another friend that I would give nothing to anybody and lend nothing to anybody for a while. I have done too much of it." Referring to the renewal of the Symphony concerts in May, he wrote: "I must make contracts, must encourage those men in the belief of a good future, and yet cannot feel easy to bind myself, because of age and increased inefficiency. I'm in no distress, but have been too free, because the object was greater than the money, for the Orchestra, people, or the University."

His best friends understood why he did not speak more freely about the war. President Eliot wrote thus on January 5, 1915:—

MY DEAR HIGGINSON:—

I will go to the Union to-morrow evening.

You must, of course, keep on good terms with your German musicians. All the more, because music is really the only subject in which Germany can still claim superiority. Her philosophy and religion have failed to work; her education has not developed in the people power to reason or good judgment; her efficiency even in war is not greater than that of her adversaries; and her ruling class is too stupid to see that their game of domination in Europe is already lost.

Has it occurred to you that the Germans did not invent a single one of the new machines and processes which they are now using for purposes of destruction? Here is a list of some of these inventions,— all made in countries which enjoy some public liberty,— telegraph, telephone, wireless telegraphy, dreadnought, submarine, aeroplane, high explosives, typewriter, shoe machinery, sewing-machine, explosive engine and automobiles, anæsthesia, typhoid inoculation, and asepsis.

I hope that this war is going to prove that an individual or a nation will develop a higher efficiency as well as a finer character with liberty than without it.

Portions of three letters from Major Higginson to President Eliot, in May, show how his mind was working.

*May 6.* [The day before the sinking of the Lusitania.] The world seems to be agog, and now the East is going to begin. . . . But if all Europe and Asia wants to fight, or at any rate keep itself in a snarl, what other Powers should keep their heads except those of America — North and South?

*May 8.* The present trouble puzzles me, as it does everybody. We cannot fight; we have nothing to fight with. We can, however, cut off all intercourse with Germany and make it so unpleasant for the German Ambassador that he would like to go home. We can refuse to let anything in the way of merchandise go to Germany, and we can refuse to let any of her merchandise come here, so far as can be managed, although that would be an injury to us. In short, we could stop all intercourse, I suppose. We can also take and hold fast a dozen of her ships, which are now interned, until ample money indemnification is given for all that she has done. As a matter of fact, it seems to me that Germany could not have done a worse thing for herself, for she has enraged a great many people, not only on account of the cruelty but the meanness of this whole business. . . .

*May 10.* . . . There is no question about the Lusitania matter as I see it. It seems to be illegal, and there is no occasion for other adjectives about it. I have not seen the country so stirred since the Civil War. I very much wish that Mr. Wilson should have better advice, which he needs terribly. Root and Taft both would be good advisers at the present juncture. Taft is undecided at times, but he has a great deal of sense and knowledge and a great deal of courage, or I am

greatly mistaken. I should suppose that the President would demand of Germany instant apology and ample indemnification, with a promise that this shall not happen again; and that he would also say the same things to Bernstorff, saying that if he did not get these things, Bernstorff would get his passports. I should suppose also that the President would order that Philadelphia Consul and his clerks out of the country at once, without any delay or excuse, whether it is within the custom or is not within the custom, and that he would give warnings to various Germans who do not seem to be able to hold their tongues, that they hold their tongues or leave the country. Of course these are harsh measures, but we have either got to fight or stop the fire which is burning all over the country. Dernburg does not seem to have sufficient sense to hold his tongue, and if I knew him, I would tell him that he would better leave at once. In short, I would either have a full apology, or else I would tell all those men to get out. This would be no great injury to Germany, although it would be a warning to her. In writing to Germany, I would not mince matters one bit, but would express my horror and disgust at their cowardly and barbarous acts. In short, I would do everything except to make war. If they chose to declare war, we have all their ships here, and should take them, and we should do what we could to help England. Germany cannot hurt us, and I think she cannot accuse us of breaking the Monroe Doctrine, because we are simply resenting an attack on our own people. I think I would go as far as that. . . .

On September 24, 1915, he wrote to Senator Lodge:—

DEAR CABOT:—

A friend who has much red blood in his veins has been simmering for a year past and now comes to me to ask if a public meeting at Faneuil Hall, to express our strong sympathy with the Allies on moral grounds, would be worth while. . . . As

you are aware, I cannot take an active part in such a meeting, because I must get along somehow or other with the hundred men of the Orchestra. If I did it, it might break up the Orchestra.

Yet he had already begun to counsel preparation for war, as a measure of national defense. In a lecture on "Military History," delivered at the Harvard Summer School on July 7, he had advocated "a system of training like the Swiss system." He had prepared this address in April, and sent me the manuscript with this comment: —

What I especially had in mind was to point out our national slovenly ways, our guesses instead of study, our lack of knowledge, our conceit and especially that of our public men, and then to set forth some of the experiences of the Civil War, and to point out to them that our best Massachusetts militia regiment, which went at once, was under the command of a classmate of mine, who, when ordered at Bull Run to move forward, refused to do so. Thank God, he at last got into the fight and was wounded. It was only want of training.

He had also spoken at the Harvard Commencement on June 24, and this letter to Senator Lodge on the following day refers to this speech: —

. . . The one thought that I wish to express constantly is that we have no quarrel with any nation as such, — that is, as regards the people, — but we will not have the Prussian rule in this country, and we will not submit to their regulations or views with regard to us. We cannot as yet interfere, and also we cannot be neutral — that is, you and I cannot. I do suppose that we would better keep out of the war if we can, and that it would be better for Europe as well as for us; but I also suppose that we will not bear certain things which Ger-

many thinks we may bear. As I ventured to say: "If any man strikes your mother, will you ask him to strike her again, or will you resent it as strongly as you can?" If our Revolution was worth while, if our fight in 1861 was worth while, if the whole English history for years and years has been worth while, or that of France or Italy, it is worth while to condemn absolutely and entirely the Prussian idea of government. It does not concern me very much who began this row, although the evidence is very clear. On my desk lies an unread letter from a dear old German friend, who is as true as you are, and who believes that Germany was oppressed and threatened and, therefore, she fought. I cannot quarrel with him any more than I can with you. Also, I cannot agree with him, and have told him so. But if this world is to be subjected to the Prussian rule, the Lord or the devil can receive me as soon as he likes. I cannot now — and indeed since I was five years old I never have been able to — conceive of life under any such rules, regulations and theories as Bismarck and William and the Prussian Oligarchy chose to impose; and when I said: "We will not bear it," I meant just that. . . .

It surprised no one, therefore, that he appeared in the Boston "Herald" of October 27, 1915, as a champion of "preparedness": "First comes the need of an army and navy able to keep the peace, no matter who knocks at the door. . . . Never fear that we, as a nation, shall want to fight after watching this terrible war. We need these armed forces in order to keep the peace, and our nation once well prepared for war, is it likely that any nation would meddle with us?" He was aware, of course, that this was precisely the same reasoning employed by Germany, France, Russia, and other European powers during the forty years preceding 1914. It had proved futile as a preventive of war. It was the old Hamiltonian argument for a self-sufficient empire, strong enough to resist any possible attack — an argument irrefutable only

so long as rival empires do not also arm upon the same principle. Yet Major Higginson, together with increasing masses of his countrymen, now saw no escape from this endless circle of cause and consequence.

He became Chairman of the Committee that arranged the Preparedness parade in Boston on May 27, 1916, and insisted, though he was in his eighty-second year, upon marching on foot the entire distance. In that same week he issued a plea for the Plattsburg training camps: "If our American citizens are not going to look after our country, who will do it? . . . Manhood suffrage requires manhood service, and this means service for every man and woman in the country. *Go to Plattsburg!*" On June 24, in the Boston "Herald," he pleaded for "500,000 volunteers for service anywhere, whether on land or on the water, and thus let Mexico see that we are in earnest. . . . The President has tried patience and delay, and they do not suit the case." Still he uttered no specific word against Germany, not even in his eloquent address in Appleton Chapel on November 1, 1916, in memory of the Harvard men who had fallen in the war.

The Orchestra, as a matter of fact, had enjoyed singularly tranquil and successful seasons in 1914-15, 1915-16, and well into the spring of 1917. In spite of the trying circumstances, Mr. Higginson's confidence in Dr. Muck, in the players, and in the public's continued cordiality, had seemed to be justified. His affairs in State Street were gradually adjusting themselves, and the sharpest anxiety had passed. There was not in truth very much for him to do in his office, and this period was one of extraordinary activity in letter-writing, particularly to public officials. There are fifty letters from President Wilson in his files, in reply to long communications from Major Higginson. The Major had approved of the repeal of the Panama Tolls Act, as the only honorable fulfillment of our treaty obligations. He likewise approved the lowering of the tariff. He liked the Federal Reserve Act in principle, but found fault

with many details. He was invariably critical of the Interstate Commerce Commission, and accepted with reluctance any measures looking toward governmental regulation and control of public-service corporations. The railroad situation continued to be a very sore point with him, long after he had ceased to own any railroad shares or bonds himself. During the Roosevelt and Wilson administrations alike, he always feared that some indefinable thing was about "to happen" at Washington. It may possibly be that State Street is as credulous as any other section of Boston Town. In general, Major Higginson's letters to the President, to Cabinet officers, and to Senators and Representatives from Massachusetts express his impatience with the tardy processes of legislation, and in fact his ineradicable distrust of legislation itself. "If we could only have quiet, no more moves, no Congress, the country would move on." He wrote these words to President Eliot in 1915, but he might have written them in any year since 1865.

Although he approved many of the acts of President Wilson's first administration, and wrote him in praise of his handling of the Lusitania incident, his enthusiasm gradually cooled, as it had done during the administrations of Roosevelt and Taft. He had never made any pretense of strong party fealty, and he had inherited his full share of the immemorial New England capacity for pointing out flaws in the conduct of the government of the United States. In the campaign of 1916 he had voted for Hughes.

And now, in the spring of 1917, when it was at last evident that the aggressions of Germany could be met only by war, Major Higginson was in a quandary. He had urged President Wilson to prompt action, and had supported his policy of arming our ships against submarine attacks. Our declaration of war was expected from hour to hour. As soon as it came, what would happen to the Boston Symphony Orchestra and its German conductor? Dr. Muck was just finishing the fifth

and final year of his second engagement. What was to be done?

On March 22, 1917, Major Higginson turned for counsel, as so often, to President Eliot.

DEAR OLD FRIEND:—

. . . We have come to a strange pass. Our contracts provided for war and other accidents, gave me the power to break up the work at any time if the Orchestra was injured seriously; and it was left for me to decide. We have a dozen nationalities in the Orchestra, and the men have behaved perfectly well toward each other since the war began. Dr. Muck is a hearty German, who wished to enlist and was refused for lack of strength. He has behaved well, and has been cordial to me since the war began, as before; and he has been most kindly received by audiences here and in other cities. . . . I trust him entirely as an artist and as a man, and he has worked as no other conductor has worked.

Query: Shall I go on with him and the Orchestra? He is the only man I know who can conduct for us. The Orchestra is fine, and has set the pace for the country, following out Theodore Thomas. The Orchestra has won a large and good public here and in many other cities, and the New York house is sold out permanently.

My connection with the Orchestra has shut my mouth many times, to my great regret, since August, 1914.

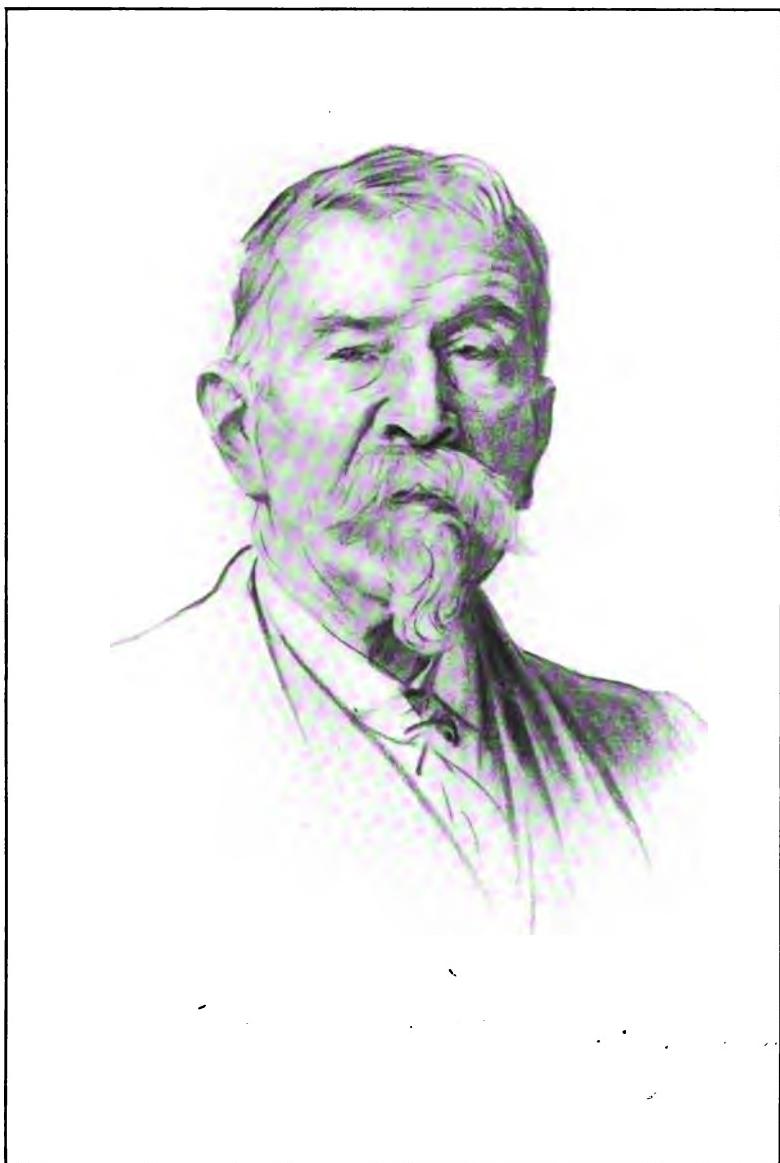
Turn it over, and advise me, for you are a sober, hearty patriot and a great figure in education and civilization."

The reply follows.

DEAR OLD FRIEND:—

I have taken a little time to think over your letter of March 22nd, for I find your problem a hard one.

. . . Have you, or the French members of the Orchestra,



HENRY L. HIGGINSON  
From a crayon portrait by J. S. Sargent (1911)



had any reason to believe that the German members, or some of them, were what may fairly be called German agents? If no such suspicions have been entertained, I should think it would be safe for you to go on with the Orchestra until war breaks out, and the Government takes measures against Germans resident in this country, confining them or subjecting them to police surveillance. I think our Government will be slow to take any really troublesome action against German residents; but the moment killing, drowning, and wounding begin, our people will probably make the Germans with us uncomfortable and apprehensive. Then you may have to stop maintaining the Orchestra.

For the present, it seems to me to be possible for you to go on just as you have been going on. As to engagements for next year, is it possible to make them anything more than provisional, or dependent on the coming of peace?

It must have been very disagreeable to you to feel that your mouth has been shut; but I hardly think that such reticence as you have observed has really done any harm. I am sure that it has done you no harm. Everybody knows what your position really is in regard to national defense and war on Germany. Probably the members of the Orchestra all understand you and your opinions. They must know, for example, how active your firm has been in floating war loans of the Allies. In short, your comparative reticence has been unnatural and grievous to you and your family; but not harmful to the public. . . .

Within a week thereafter the nation was at war. The fate of the Orchestra was of course only a "leaf in the storm," but it involved and revealed the personal qualities of Major Higginson in such a striking fashion that some detail is necessary.<sup>1</sup> On July 5, 1917, he wrote to President Eliot:—

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Higginson's files of Orchestra correspondence for 1917 and 1918 alone would fill several volumes as large as the present one. Only the more significant and typical letters can be given here.

Sundry good and friendly people have told me to look out for Dr. Muck and his doings, and some of them are sure that he is making mischief; yet nobody knows anything about it; they simply guess and bid me to dismiss him. . . . If he is dangerous, so are many others of the Orchestra, and, if he goes, the Orchestra goes too, for I cannot replace him. I have never discussed war-matters with him, but I believe him to be a loyal South German. His father took out Swiss papers of citizenship for his children when Dr. Muck was a child, and those he has to-day. He was a favorite of the Emperor and came here at my solicitation, and because of much larger pay. There is the state of the case. . . . My intention is this — to go on as always and let things take their course. If any of these men behave wrongly, they will be punished by the law; and in case the war is finished, the Orchestra will be wanted. What else can I do? The men are of ten nationalities, and at my request have behaved perfectly well in every way since the war was declared. Of course, it is bread and butter to them. Whether Dr. Muck looks pleasant or is pleasant to those who run across him, is not my concern. So far as I know, he treats everybody well, but he should be by inheritance a loyal German. He was not accepted by the German war office because he was not strong enough, or perhaps too old, for he is 55 or 56 years of age. . . .

On July 9 he wrote again:—

. . . I could not keep the Orchestra going without Dr. Muck, and should not try. In the first place, conductors who like old and new music are very rare; next, Dr. Muck is the most industrious, painstaking and the ablest conductor whom we have ever had. . . . I do not want the modern men, that is, the men who believe in the modern music only and have little respect for the old music; and that is the tendency of the conductors.

He is perfectly honest in his transactions, in his work; he

never grumbles at anything, and makes the best of it; he is on most friendly terms with all his men, whom he rules firmly and kindly. I could not replace him either in this country or any other. Next, the Orchestra does not play well under any member of the Orchestra. We have tried that, and it does not work. If the quality given to the public were let down, I should lose my houses, and, if I lost my houses, I should have to stop.

I do not wish to be relieved of the burden during the war; that is to say, I do not wish to do so now, but what time will bring forth I cannot tell. To-day I am content to go on. If peace came to-morrow, I should not know where to look for a conductor in Europe.

My only question to you was whether I had not better let things take their course. Let me repeat that I can stop the Orchestra whenever I think it is, so to speak, dismantled in that degree that it is not satisfactory. If Dr. Muck went, it would be so dismantled. If Dr. Muck should be sent away, plenty of the men should be sent away on the same ground. Of course you see that the reason for getting the best possible conductor is to attain the highest possible standard in music, and also to hold the audiences, for I have to play against many other orchestras in this country, which have improved largely during the last thirty years. To-day not a seat can be had in New York, and very few good seats, in the afternoon, here. . . .

[*Penned postscript.*] Of course, it would be a relief financially and physically to stop the concerts, but a man may not undertake a real job and then drop it, to ease himself. You never have. But I will not sin against our country's welfare, or even disregard well-founded complaints of my loyalty. No one ever alleges anything overt, but some good people snarl.

President Eliot replied on July 11:—

"The reasons you give for keeping the Orchestra going and holding on to Dr. Muck are unanswerable, unless Dr.

Muck or some members or member of the Orchestra commit real offenses against this country. You and I will not believe that they have committed any offenses, or desire to do so, until we get real proofs of misconduct on their part. A safe conclusion then is to go on just as you have been.

"Your statement, however, that you could not keep the Orchestra going without Dr. Muck is somewhat disquieting. When peace comes, will he not surely desire to return immediately to Berlin, to take part in the rehabilitation of Germany and its Capital? Must that natural determination on his part bring the Orchestra to an end? I hope not."

Such was the situation in the midsummer of 1917. With every month of warfare, popular feeling against the Germans had naturally grown in bitterness. Talk of "German spies" filled the air, and the conduct of the German members of the Symphony Orchestra was closely watched. Of the 100 players, 51 were American citizens (17 being native-born), and 22 were Germans, 9 of whom had taken out their first naturalization papers. There were 8 Austrians, 2 Italians, 2 British, 6 Dutch, 2 Russians, 3 French, 2 Belgians, and 2 Bohemians. Dr. Muck's status was peculiar. He was born in Hesse, of Bavarian parents, in 1859, and acquired Swiss citizenship in 1867 by reason of his father's becoming a Swiss citizen in that year. The Imperial German Government did not come into existence until 1871. Hesse then became a part of it. Dr. Muck brought his Swiss papers to this country, and a Swiss passport. But in blood and sympathy he was unquestionably German, although the Federal authorities, after most careful investigation, reported that they had "found nothing to incriminate him as a German agent or as having performed any act which is prejudicial to the interests of our country." These authorities, it should be added, were long doubtful whether he could properly be classed as an "alien enemy" under the terms of the President's proclamations of April 6 and November 16, although he had certainly been a "denizen," if not technically a "citizen," of the German Empire.

When the Orchestra season opened in Boston, there was no evidence of trouble, except a few empty seats. But there had been some talk about the non-appearance of an American flag on Symphony Hall. Major Higginson, preoccupied with real war-work and with the future of the Orchestra, had simply forgotten to order a flag displayed.<sup>1</sup> He remedied the oversight as soon as it was called to his attention, but the incident was unfortunate. "Until lately my loyalty has never been questioned," he wrote sadly. Still more unlucky, as it proved, was his attitude toward the proposal that the Star-Spangled Banner should be played at the beginning of each Symphony concert. It had been invariably played at the "Pop" concerts during the summer, but Major Higginson, in common with most persons of musical training, felt that this air was out of place in a Symphony programme. As one correspondent expressed it:—

"I am sorry to see from the papers how much you have been harried about the Orchestra by people who have more zeal than judgment, and who, however loyal, can certainly not have proved their patriotism more than you have yourself. Whatever may be said for the playing of patriotic airs in public gatherings, the Star-Spangled Banner is not well-fitted for a full-stringed symphony orchestra, good as it is for a military band. The objection to playing it is not in any sense on patriotic grounds, but because of its inappropriateness, and I hope you will not give way. If these same people were to demand that, as a proof of loyalty, you should wear a star-spangled blue waistcoat and red-and-white striped trousers, you would refuse, not from lack of patriotism, but from a sense of what is appropriate. Those of us who, being too old to bear arms, are working to our full capacity for the country in these times, when acts count more than words, need not fear any charge of lack of enthusiasm for our country's cause."

<sup>1</sup> Judge Hoar of Concord, when once requested to buy a flag and "raise" it on the Fourth of July, had remarked dryly: "Mine is a patriotism that *never flags*."

But that last sentence was too optimistic. When the war-spirit is blazing, a dispassionate judgment about the "appropriateness" of such a symbol as a flag or a national anthem becomes impossible. If Henry Higginson had possessed the political instinct of the average ward politician, he could have saved the situation; he had only to dismiss Dr. Muck, to wave the American flag, order the national anthem played, and make one of his inimitable little speeches to a pleased audience. But he had no political cunning whatever. He was a weary and perplexed old man of eighty-three, who was simply trying, as always, to discover his duty and to do it.

The storm broke first in Providence. The "Reminiscences" dictated in 1918 continue the story:—

In the autumn of 1917 some mutterings were heard about the Germans and the Orchestra, and when the first concert in Providence was to be given, there came a demand that the Star-Spangled Banner be played. The demand came to Mr. Ellis, the manager, when he was sitting in my office between two and three o'clock in the afternoon. The demand came from four women in Providence, who were subscribers and who were unknown to us. As the Orchestra was to go to Providence at five o'clock and, therefore, there was no time for rehearsal, as we had not the music, and as Dr. Muck had never heard anything about it, it seemed impossible. Therefore, by telegraph, I ordered stopped all sale of extra seats for the Providence concert that night. Fearing some trouble, I went to Providence myself and attended the concert, which was well given and received. One or two newspaper men wished to come in and were not allowed to do so. We then came home, and the next day Dr. Muck heard of this request. He had not heard anything about it before. Then trouble began. X, of the Providence "Journal," who had been advertising himself and making various revelations, was abusive, as well as one or two of the other papers, and the request for the Star-

Spangled Banner was heard in Boston. In the spring of 1917 one man in Boston had written to me on the subject, but I had put it aside.

We had played in Providence Tuesday evening, October 30th. I considered carefully the question of playing the National Anthem at our concerts; one good friend advised me to have it played. My objection had been that it did not belong in the programme and that nobody of value to me had asked for it. Three wise friends advised me not to have it played. On Friday, November 2, I asked Dr. Muck to come to my office, which he did. I then said to him: "Will you play the Star-Spangled Banner at the beginning of our concert to-day and always?" His reply was: "What will they say to me at home?" I said: "I do not know, but let me say this: when I am in a Catholic country and the Host is carried by, or a procession of churchmen comes along, I take off my hat out of consideration — not to the Host, but respect for the customs of the nation. It seems to me only friendly and reasonable." He said: "Very well, I will play the Star-Spangled Banner." At the same time Dr. Muck said that he would like to resign his position; to which I replied that that would be very inconvenient; that I did not know what we could do, as I knew of nobody to take his place. He said: "Suppose I should be interned?" to which I replied: "That is most unlikely"; and left it there.

Before the concert began on Friday afternoon, I went on the stage, stated that Dr. Muck had resigned, and that the matter was in my hands; that I had asked him to play the Star-Spangled Banner at the beginning of all our concerts, and that he would do so — and he always did.

On the next journey we had no trouble in New York, Brooklyn, Philadelphia, or Washington; but Baltimore threatened a riot if the Orchestra was allowed to play there as it always had. Therefore, the order was given to cut out Baltimore entirely, and the Orchestra has never played there

since. The threat came from an ex-Governor of Maryland, and many false statements were made with regard to the Orchestra and Dr. Muck. We played in Philadelphia the next day with success, and then in New York and Brooklyn, but there was more or less uneasiness from a few people. This trouble went on all winter more or less. Very many letters were written to me, begging that the concerts should go on as usual, with the same conductor and the same musicians. A few letters objected, a few were anonymous, and some were very abusive and, indeed, indecent.

A few passages from the enormous correspondence of this autumn should be given here, for they reveal a side of Henry Higginson that the public ignored. The press had spread the Orchestra troubles over the country, with the usual distortions and falsifications. Some Boston newspapers took pains to tell the exact truth, but the truth never overtakes the lie. The impression received by the general public in other cities was that Major Higginson was a well-meaning but arbitrary old gentleman, who had now received, particularly from Providence and Baltimore, a much-needed lesson in "patriotism." But in reality what most impresses the reader of his correspondence is the gentle patience, the infinite personal courtesy, with which he undertook to reply to every signed communication, no matter how abusive. There was perhaps one exception. The Washingtonian who wrote, "The statement attributed to you that the Star-Spangled Banner has no place in a programme of artistic symphony music is an indication of an unmitigated snobbery — as ungentlemanly and unrefined as it is unpatriotic and un-American," apparently had that letter returned to him; for he writes again: "I notice that you took care to retain the blank half-sheet. Had I only been aware how small a man you really are — as evidenced by that petty action on your part — I should probably not have been so exercised over your gratuitous insult to the national air. . . .

As you seem to be hard up for stationery, I am enclosing a whole blank sheet, which may come in handy some time."

From Roanoke, Virginia, came an indignant demand: "If you are a Major of State Militia or of the U.S. Army . . . you should be stripped of your title and be dishonorably discharged" for insulting the National Anthem. Major Higginson, in replying, courteously hinted where he had earned his title: "I served in the Northern Army during the Civil War, and met the Confederate troops, more especially those of Virginia. We had high respect for them and hope they had the same feeling toward us." The Virginian promptly apologized.

An army officer, disgusted with the newspaper attacks upon Major Higginson, wrote to him: "War is indeed made more terrible by the persons who stay at home!"

"If you mind the nasty letters," wrote President Eliot, "I suggest that whoever opens your mail throw away all the unsigned ones and all the signed ones from strangers." But Mr. Higginson could not bring himself to do this, although he confessed that "when mud is thrown, a little usually sticks, and, at any rate, leaves a stain."

More than ever in these autumn days, he sought counsel from his tried friends. He had yielded on the Star-Spangled Banner, but he was not ready to break up the Orchestra. "My own opinion is," he wrote Erving Winslow, "that if I backed out from this work now I should be a sneak." "The public is not always reasonable," he wrote President Lowell, on November 5, ". . . and now I am wondering how long people will bear the Star-Spangled Banner played at every concert. They will get tired of it, and presently I shall have remonstrances the other way. That is one of the troubles of war, and we must bear it as well as we can."

"It seems to me," wrote President Lowell on November 20, "that the continuance of the Symphony Concerts, and the retention of Dr. Muck as Director is a very important matter for our community. Music is one of the things in which America

is singularly backward, and the amount that the Symphony Orchestra has contributed to American education cannot be overestimated. I do not see how German music, or German musicians, can corrupt America, or Germanize us. Because we quarrel with a nation because their conduct is outrageous and requires to be suppressed by force, is no reason why we should deprive ourselves of their art."

President Eliot and a score of other leading citizens of Boston, whom Mr. Higginson consulted at this time, were of the same opinion. They had been informed by Mr. Higginson on November 20 that "The Department of Justice has conducted a special investigation of the newspaper charges against Dr. Muck, and has assured me that no objectionable conduct whatsoever on his part has been discovered. This is in keeping with the result of a former investigation in the early fall." And nevertheless the clamor for Dr. Muck's dismissal steadily increased.

Two facts must be kept clearly in mind at this point. One is that nothing had as yet transpired to shake Mr. Higginson's confidence in Dr. Muck as a man of honor. He stood by him with chivalric and obstinate loyalty, believing him to be innocent of any of the charges whispered or shouted against him. Major Higginson's action at this time must be judged in the light of this belief, and not in the light of his later knowledge that Dr. Muck was a scoundrel.

The other fact — to which Major Higginson gave possibly too tardy a recognition — was a phase of war-feeling which made it impossible for many good men and women to look — if they could help it — at a German face, or to read a German book, or to listen to a German musical composition. It was illogical and perhaps irrational; yet most of us, in our disgust and horror at Germany's conduct in the war, could not help transferring our dislike to any object that reminded us vividly of Germany. Now Dr. Muck, however innocent he might be, was certainly one of those objects. Many persons pointed out

the fact to Mr. Higginson, and if he was at fault at all in this whole trying experience, it was in his slowness in putting himself in the place of the subscribers to concerts.

Yet he tried to do so. One of his kinswomen, for instance, wrote him affectionately that it was really impossible for her to attend the concerts any longer, for the reason just stated. His reply on November 14 is touching in its simplicity and frankness:—

Of course I understand your ground about Dr. Muck and find it perfectly natural, and the more horrid things the Germans do, the more natural it seems. I have thought and still think that I know about that man very well, for I have seen considerable of him for the last eight years, and think he is a typical artist who holds strong opinions about art and not very much about other things. Of course he is a German, and of course he sympathizes with that side, but he has done us great services which it is fair to recognize. When they talk about his having done this or that which is disloyal to us, when they say that he is pushing schemes here, they are saying what they do not know. . . . He is very shrewd and he would not give himself away on any account, no matter what he thinks or what he wants. But I do feel very badly that the public should throw so many stones at him and at the Orchestra. . . . I am sorry to say that it has destroyed for me all pleasure in the Orchestra. We will go on with it if possible. And there comes another point. I don't know whether it is possible. If the newspapers and cavillers will stop their noise now, we can go on, and if not, I shall have to stop, and it will cost a very large sum of money. I can break all the contracts of all the men, but the poor devils have got to have something to live on, and if I won't employ them, who will? In short, it is an impossible position for them. People tell me to let them go home, but they can't go home. A Frenchman could return; the Belgians cannot, nor the Roumanians, or Poles,

or Bohemians, or Russians, or anybody else except possibly some Englishmen, and I don't think we have any. Meantime, the papers say that I threaten to disband the Orchestra. The people who disband it are the newspapers and the men and women who attack it. And speaking of this last class, the chief people who attack it are those who do not go to the concerts, who are n't in the cities where the Orchestra has played, and the newspapers.

Years ago I refused to have anything to do with the musical union, because the union stipulates how many rehearsals shall be given and what the men shall do and what their pay shall be, etc., and I could not get the best artists in that way, and I sought the best artists. The union warned me that they would hit us when they could, and I believe they are at the bottom of this whole trouble. Then there are the men who are envious of our success, like some of the leaders in New York and Philadelphia. They began last summer by saying Dr. Muck was going away. It is not well to call names, but I could tell you of two or three who have done what they could. It is a cabal which wants to throw us out, and it will succeed if the papers and a certain number of noisy people keep up the row. . . . I tell you, dear child, I never have had such a painful experience in this life. Certainly I tried my best to help our people and give them enjoyment and refreshment. I could go on in the same way if allowed, but at present I cannot conceive that we can play another year. One silly woman, whom you know, wrote me the other day that she did n't like the attitude of Dr. Muck. She knew no more about him than the man in the moon. I call it a very mean attitude to take, and it is a very different thing from your own attitude, which I respect and understand entirely.

To get back to the two contracts which I made. One was with the public in various cities, to give them a certain kind of concert, and I will try to do it. The other is my contract with a lot of musicians, to give them certain employment, and I

shall try to do it. They tell me to change the conductor. There is no other conductor to take, known to me. As I said before, they say to send these men home, but they cannot go. Supposing that a great German artist has painted a lot of beautiful pictures which your father has bought, as he did the great Millets, and that he offered them to the Museum and the Museum said, "We don't want your darned old pictures. They were painted by a German. Never mind if they are beautiful. We won't have them in the house."

However, I am tired out and can think of nothing else, which is very childish. But if I cannot write to you, dear child, I don't know to whom I can write. . . .

He turned again to President Eliot for counsel on December 5:—

. . . The feeling among good people who care much about the Orchestra and are most friendly to me, on this subject, puzzles me. This morning I have been hearing the words of a wise, enthusiastic lover of music and of our Orchestra. She takes her tickets, but she does not go because she cannot bear to hear these Germans play. She tells me that many, many people feel the same way; and when I asked her why there were not many vacant seats, she said they give their seats away. All that, no doubt, is true, but still a very large majority is on the other side. It really is a question for you and me as to what is right in the interests of civilization and particularly in the cause of our country, and I am puzzled.

To this letter President Eliot replied, December 6:—

"Several excellent women have said to me that they cannot stand seeing that hateful Dr. Muck leading admirably an orchestra largely composed of Germans and demonstrating the superiority of Germany in music during the last hundred years. Their judgment is overpowered by their passionate

hatred of the actual Germany and its crimes on land and sea. They cannot bear to admit that Germany has any merits whatever, or ever had. Some of our learned men want to return to Germany all the honors and titles they have received from her, and to withdraw from membership in German learned societies. These, I think, must be persons whose imaginations deal chiefly with the present, soon become cloudy as to the past, and are unable to reach forward into the future.

"We must admit, however, that the case of the Orchestra presents some difficulties besides technical ones. Music stirs the emotions very much at the moment of hearing it; and the emotions stirred by the Orchestra in a woman who has a husband or a son in the Army or Navy are adverse to the performance, and particularly to the conductor. You and I are not sorry to remember in these days that the American people as a mass has been, and is, a fighting people, prone to resort to force, and easily provoked to violence and combat. This is true of the women as well as of the men; and when the people have gone to war they are not going to be considerate of alien enemies within the gates.

"I am not at all puzzled about the right course of action in regard to the Orchestra. I think it should be maintained through the War as a valuable institution of art education. I wish it had more of an institutional aspect. It, of course, appears now as the creation of an individual, which may cease whenever that individual dies or is disabled. . . .

"If desired, the Orchestra might play some other national airs in addition to, or substitution for, the Star-Spangled Banner. America, for example, is a fine old German tune, known in England as God Save the King; and the Marseillaise is the best of all the national hymns. Mrs. Howe's hymn is set to a first-rate marching tune which would be welcome in many northern cities. . . .

"Finally, I hope you are eating and sleeping well, and taking

plenty of fresh air every day. It would be somewhat mortifying if your activities should be even temporarily impaired in consequence of these attacks on the Orchestra and its conductor. . . ."

Mr. Higginson wrote to him again on December 7:—

. . . Not being a reasonable man, and having very strong feelings about this war and its causes, I sympathize with the people who cannot bear to hear German music or Dr. Muck or the men in the Orchestra. . . . On Wednesday he made an application for a permit, according to the wishes of the Marshal here, and thereby agreed to do nothing and say nothing [adverse] to our country. . . . The exact status of Dr. Muck will be settled presently by the Attorney-General's office. . . . The whole question of citizenship is very mixed and must be left to the experts.

If we feel very strongly about the Germans, I understand that German music would hurt people's feelings; still more, that German musicians rendering that music would hurt people's feelings. No doubt the same is true of A Mighty Fortress is our God, for it was composed by Luther, as I understand it. The same is true of God Save the King — America. Both of these are matters of association. Probably many of the hymns which we sing in church are of German origin, and certainly the greatest masterpieces of music have been written by Germans or men with German blood. Of course there is a claim that Beethoven was not a German but a Dutchman, which is pretty much the same thing; in short, it is not a matter of reason, but a matter of feeling, and one good that we get from women is that they are often governed by their feelings and not infrequently are nearer right than we are.

The other side is this. Women make up much the larger part of the audiences which hear the Boston Symphony Orchestra, and probably other orchestras. If the women are hostile or refuse to go, the audiences would be small, and

without good audiences our Orchestra cannot play. We must have first-rate houses and, to that end, we must have a very high-grade orchestra and we must have a very high-grade conductor. . . . When people talk about it being easy to find them, I don't know where, and I have tried to keep myself informed for many years. . . . I also have thought of the Orchestra playing other national airs, but how to bring it in is not easy. Anybody may say of America that it is German, and they probably would. I do not believe it would be wise to play the Marseillaise, and I have already considered playing Mrs. Howe's hymn, which has much more swing and much more charm than the Star-Spangled Banner or almost anything else. In a multitude of cares, we have not done it as yet.

You hope that I am eating and sleeping well. I am eating as little as possible, and usually sleep well, which is really my only gift. I have slept everywhere, even in church, in a pigsty, etc., but it is my gift; and I get a fair amount of fresh air, and I fret a great deal, which is the most unwise and injurious habit man can have. It is almost impossible to help it. I am foolish enough to mind the nasty letters, signed and unsigned. In short, I have never learned any wisdom since I was born.

As to making our Orchestra an institutional affair, how to do it I do not know. I have always believed that it had much of its success from the fact that it was so simple, that the conductor managed all the art part, that our men managed the business part, and that I passed on the important points, and nothing more. . . .

As to the women who have husbands and brothers and sons and grandsons at the front, and who are nervous about them or else deeply grieved, there is only one word to be said. We must pity them, sympathize with them to the utmost. When I was brought home hurt in '63, and heard and saw the awful suffering of the women, I thought the wounds were a very

small matter; and to-day I do not pity the young fellows who are going out one bit; on the contrary, envy them; but I do pity the women who send them, and if they are nervous or cannot bear to hear a German conduct the Orchestra and listen to German musicians in the Orchestra, I have nothing to say. Only they cannot have their cake and eat it too, and if they frown on the Orchestra and even refuse to go, though they buy the tickets, the game is up. . . .

But in truth the game was more nearly "up" than even Mr. Higginson realized. The Orchestra had made the usual contracts for out-of-town concerts in January, February, and March, 1918. On account of the continued outcry against Dr. Muck, the concerts in Mid-Western cities were abandoned, although the Department of Justice had ruled in December that the Orchestra, with Dr. Muck and the other "alien enemies" among the players, could go anywhere in the United States except to the District of Columbia. This exclusion from Washington was based upon a proclamation by the President regarding "alien enemies." The Attorney-General and his assistants treated Mr. Higginson with the greatest personal consideration, and he accepted the rulings of the Department of Justice with entire loyalty. Although Dr. Muck had, on legal advice, refused to register in January as an "alien enemy," holding that his Swiss passport protected him from that status, the Department of Justice decided that as a former "denizen" of Germany, no exception could be made in his case. The moment the out-of-town concerts began, Mr. Higginson had to face a new storm of protesting letters. His Reminiscences describe briefly the troubles in New York:—

By and by — say in January — one or two New York women, backed up by one or two men, — people in good position, — wrote me demanding that Dr. Muck should be dismissed and this or that, because he was a German and because

they said he was doing very wrong. The correspondence went on more or less for a month or two, and the affair became very disagreeable and very annoying to me. In early February, owing to certain facts, I made up my mind that Dr. Muck should go at the end of the season (he had stayed over one year at my request, his contract being out), as it seemed wiser that he should leave us. I had promised a near friend that it should be done.

In March came the last concerts in New York, and as there had been a great deal of abuse from that city, both from decent and indecent people, I went with Mrs. Higginson to the last concerts there — one concert in the evening Thursday, March 14, and another in the afternoon, Saturday, March 16. On both occasions Dr. Muck was very well received by the audience, and even I was applauded as I left the hall to speak to Dr. Muck in the intervals, both at the evening and the afternoon concerts. In short, his reception was perfectly good.

These New York people had charged that we were distributing tickets in New York and Brooklyn and giving them to soldiers and sailors, in order to fill the house with loyal people. This was a lie made out of whole cloth. There were no tickets given away and no seats to spare at the New York concerts or at the Brooklyn concert. On the contrary, in order not to have trouble, we stopped the sale of "standee" tickets in New York. There were a few places vacant owing to the cavil against the Orchestra, but the season there finished quietly.

Yet the strain told. On February 25, Mr. Higginson confided to an intimate friend, Judge Frederick P. Cabot of Boston, his intention to retire from all connection with the Orchestra at the end of the season, on May 4. The proposal that a committee should henceforth undertake the work thus far carried on by Major Higginson, had already been made by many friends. The letter follows:—

DEAR FRED:—

. . . My present plan is to keep absolute silence until the end of the last concert, and then to state my case from the stage—*viz.*: that the conductor has been so harassed that he can only go; and that I quit also. This plan involves a considerable statement, which can be made then and there. Any earlier statement would injure the concerts and make much trouble all around. Tell me if you approve of this plan.

Now as to the future, if you have time to consider it and take action: We have reached a time, through circumstances, when I can drop this task without comment as to my motives, because the Orchestra and conductor have been attacked, and I also, as a man who employs Germans and, therefore, whose loyalty can well be doubted. As you know, various decent people here and in other cities have joined in this attack; so the moment seems opportune.

Now, as to a committee to manage the Orchestra as in Chicago and Philadelphia: I do not know how it would work. Several times I have tried it here, and the good people always defer to me and ask what I want. Do you suppose a committee can be found that will sign yearly contracts, or longer, say for \$400,000 a year, and who will hire the hall at a loss of \$15,000 a year, and supply the music, and get and keep the confidence of the men, as well as find a great conductor, and take him for a period of years? The hardest of all is that they must keep their hands and tongues off the conduct of the art side, or they will make trouble.

One source of anxiety to me in all these years has been the chance of a large loss. It came once in a bad year of business to \$52,000, and it sent the blood to my head. This year it will be more than that. I have often wondered that the luck has been with me so greatly, wondered that it did not hurt my credit; but nobody knew the facts. Several times my father urged me to stop, but I was obstinate. The men, as you know, have come to trust in me, and have a feeling of loyalty to the

Orchestra and to me, as well as to the public. But on this last point they have been rudely shaken this year. Kind opinion has been universal until this year. . . .

You will note one point: I could not have stopped prudently at the beginning of the war, because it might have looked as if I had been badly hit by the war, and you know what a ticklish thing credit is. Now an excellent reason has arisen. I may say to you as an intimate friend that the load has become almost intolerable. It is with me night and day, and it worries me and tires my head — and that is not right to my wife or my partners. Very much of the joy of the concerts and the joy of the music is gone for me; but, again, that is of no consequence, for I have had my day, and had great comfort from the Orchestra. . . .

Another intimate friend had written on February 16:—

"As you asked my opinion, dismal as I feel the outlook to be without the Orchestra, there seems to me nothing to be done but to stop it before the insidious poison has spoiled the vision you have given us, — or obscured it, for it is immortal, — nothing can change that, — and it must arise again for our salvation 'when this tyranny is over-past.' I am naturally obstinate and a fighter, but the powers of darkness do not fight fair."

The dénouement came swiftly. On March 6 Major Higginson informed Dr. Muck that his engagement would be terminated on May 4. Dr. and Mrs. Muck asked his help in securing a permit to leave the country, and as a final act of chivalrous courtesy<sup>1</sup> Mr. Higginson applied to the Washington authorities. "They do not intend to come back. Also, they wish to keep their going a secret until the time comes.

. I am satisfied with the fact that he has done nothing disloyal or injurious in any way to our country. . . . He has

<sup>1</sup>"He has been inside our house just once since the spring of 1914." H. L. H. Henry Cabot Lodge, April 2, 1918.

behaved himself with absolute propriety in every respect. I have known him well and can testify to his honesty and honor." Never were more sincere words written.

A fortnight later, on March 25, Dr. Muck was arrested, and interned as an alien enemy. No specific charge against him was made public, in the nature of the case. But Major Higginson also learned, for the first time, that there was indisputable proof of Dr. Muck's base personal character. This narrative will not touch further upon that matter. The Reminiscences tell merely the story of the arrest of the "alien enemy":—

. . . About the first of March Dr. and Mrs. Muck had come to my office, and Dr. Muck said he thought he would better leave his position, to which I replied: "Not until the end of the season, but at that time I think you would better go"; to which they assented. At that time he was preparing the second great choral concert of the year. He had been working as he had never worked before during the whole winter, had given one very fine choral concert two or three times, and was preparing the last Bach's Passion Music. At the last rehearsal of this music I was absent with some friends in Cambridge, and during the rehearsal some United States officers came to the hall and proposed to take Dr. Muck off the stage and lock him up; but, at Mr. Ellis's request, they waited until he came from the rehearsal, then arrested him and locked him up. He was not properly treated that night, not being allowed to change his clothes,— which were wet from perspiration,— and was put in a police-station cell. The next day he was taken to Cambridge, and, after a few days there, was sent to Fort Oglethorpe, Georgia, and interned. The complaint against him had been that he was an enemy alien, so the United States attorney in Boston told my counsel, Mr. Clapp. . . .

After Dr. Muck was interned, Mr. Schmidt — a full-

blooded German — conducted the concerts and carried the season through fairly well, although it was not the same thing as under Dr. Muck; but the Orchestra kept its swing and satisfied the audiences. . . .

At the end of the season, at the last concert of Saturday evening, May 4, 1918, I went on to the stage, stated the original purposes of the Orchestra, and said that I was done with the work, added a few words to the men of the Orchestra, and came away; and that was the finish of my connection with that enterprise. Various friends had already been moving and had resolved to carry on the Orchestra, and I stated that fact at the last concert. . . .

Readers of Dana's "Two Years Before the Mast" will never forget how the good brig Alert, after beating her way in heavy weather around Cape Horn, came out upon the wide Pacific, caught the southeast trade-winds, and ran before them week after week toward California, without so much as altering a sail or bracing a yard. The tension was over, and in golden weather and with favoring winds the Alert made for port. So it was with Henry Higginson, now that the orchestra troubles were past. It is true that he had been very hard hit. He had been misrepresented, insulted, and betrayed, but he had not been conquered. He was made of indomitable stuff, and he had "carried through." Physical suffering had accompanied the worst period of his anxiety, for on that 6th of March, when he had told Dr. Muck that the engagement would cease on May 4, came a sharp attack of an old malady, which troubled him for many months.

"I regret to say," he wrote Senator Lodge on April 2, "that these attacks and rows have stirred up trouble inside of my own old body, so that for four weeks I have been incapacitated for any work, and cannot travel."<sup>1</sup> He aged visibly

<sup>1</sup> He wrote to Charles A. Coffin in May: "I've turned over the charge of our Orchestra simply because the lying dirty attacks on it and me have used me up and given me eight weeks of real physical pain."

that spring. Nevertheless, his correspondence shows no decline in mental vigor, and never had he more letters to answer. No one who has not seen his letter-files can have any conception of the number of men who presented themselves as candidates for the conductorship of the Orchestra. But he referred these aspiring artists to the committee which was organized at his house on April 18, and which undertook the future charge of the Orchestra. He was able to appear at the final Friday concert on May 3, and received an ovation from the public. On the evening of Saturday, May 4, the Orchestra played in his honor the Eroica Symphony, and never more magnificently. Major Higginson read the following brief address, in terminating his years of labor. It is perfect in tone and temper: —

MY FRIENDS: —

The Boston Symphony Orchestra was set up from the conviction of my youth that our country should have great and permanent orchestras. In Europe I had seen the pleasure and comfort of such orchestras, and it seemed my duty and was my aim to give our country the best music possible.

To achieve this object, it was necessary to give to the conductor the sole artistic responsibility as an essential to success, and then to require of him and of his men a high and ever higher standard. To win that standard nothing has been spared and the aim never forgotten; and in this season our Orchestra has reached our high-water mark.

The concerts were offered to the whole public, but my chief wish and hope was to meet the needs, and satisfy the longings for the beautiful art of the many people leading quiet or busy lives and having little enjoyment; and furthermore, to help in the education of the students of music.

To me the concerts have been a great joy, not only because of the lovely music, but chiefly because of the refreshment and enjoyment of the multitude of people unknown to me

who, leading gray lives, have needed this sunshine; and this year it is they who have written to me a mass of warm letters full of gratitude for the past and of urgent requests for the future. To these unknown friends and to all of our audiences far and wide I offer my heartiest thanks.

Thus the faith and the vision of my youth have been justified.

I had hoped to have carried on the concerts during my lifetime; but this war has brought us many troubles, and, among them, the problems of the Orchestra during this season, which have exhausted my strength and nerves. Therefore, my part in our Orchestra ceases to-night, except for the popular concerts of this year.

The conductors, the members of our Orchestra, and the office management have done their work excellently from first to last, and have deserved the warmest thanks and praise.

*(To the Musicians)*

GENTLEMEN OF THE BOSTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA:—

For many years we — you and I — have been good comrades — an honor and a great pleasure for me.

In these years we have worked hand and glove together, and have kept true to our rule, laid down at the outstart, of intelligent study under one conductor at a time; and we have reaped the reward of success sure to follow.

We have played in many cities of the United States, and have won great applause and, better still, have deserved it.

Each year has marked an advance in the quality of our music, and this year has seen our high point.

I like to think myself a member of our Orchestra, and have done my best to help you; and, on your side, you have served with an intelligence and devotion not to be forgotten by the audiences or by me. I congratulate you, and thank you for our success fairly won.

My time for work is past; and now a number of excellent

men and women have taken my place. Of you I ask for them the same intelligence and devotion as in years gone by.

My best wishes go out to you.

*(To the Audience)*

Our Orchestra has always been heartily supported by you and by the public throughout our country, else it could not have lived. It must live in all its strength and beauty, and now will be carried on by some friends who have taken it up; and for them I ask the same support which you have given me through all these years.

As the spring turned to summer, Major Higginson's physicians insisted upon his taking a rest. They succeeded in keeping him in bed for a time, but even there he had a stenographer at his elbow. There were so many persons, as always, "to be smoothed, admonished, touched up"! He followed every important move of the committee who had taken over the care of the Orchestra; kept in touch with the various phases of war-work which had their headquarters at his office; had his eye upon training camps, particularly those where Harvard students were assembled; and besides all this, assumed the responsibility of organizing community singing throughout Massachusetts. Never were his letters to his friends more genial. "The doctor says I shall be perfectly well by the first of October," he writes; "much better than I have been for a long time. Now that the load of the Orchestra is off my shoulders, I know what a load and care it has been, but I'm very glad I have had it." Hundreds of letters expressing gratitude and regard reached his bedside. William H. Taft had written during the Orchestra troubles, earlier in the year: "If I were to name a man of the highest type of loyalty and patriotism, I would name him to whom this letter is addressed." Theodore Roosevelt wrote in August: "I hope

you will soon be better. You have always been an inspiration, not only to those who knew you, but to all your countrymen, my dear sir." Mr. Higginson was particularly delighted with a letter from Elihu Root, to whom he had written offering to resign as trustee of the Carnegie Institute, on the ground that he could no longer attend many of the meetings. Mr. Root's letter of dissuasion may give comfort to other elderly gentlemen who are wondering what service they can still render to society.

*October 29, 1918.*

DEAR MAJOR:—

I have your letter of the 26th. Do not quit. What if you cannot attend all the meetings. What if you cannot attend any of them. Your continued countenance and comradeship are a source of strength, as they have been for the past seventeen years, to an Institution which really is enlarging the bounds of human knowledge and doing honest scientific work in a modest and unadvertised way. Your name is an asset and a certificate of character. Consider this view of the opportunities of life. — A man lives a long life of active touch and experience in affairs; he acquires the respect and confidence of the community; his strength declines but his judgment ripens. As he loses his capacity for the service of youth in active exertion, he acquires capacity for a new service of discrimination and guidance between the true and false objects and methods to which the oncoming generations are to devote themselves. Thousands of vague proposals, visionary schemes, dishonest schemes, waste money and effort, come to nothing. One of the services a man can render in his old age is to give the credit acquired in a long life to the things that are honest and practical and useful; so that there shall be some leadership of effort, some guide to the abounding energy of people who want to do good in the world, and do not know quite how to direct their own energies. Without something of that kind, the cranks and ignorant enthusiasts and fakers have a fair chance

to dry up the springs of benevolence with disappointed expectations.

Forgive me for preaching, and believe me, dear Major,  
Always faithfully your friend,  
ELIHU ROOT.

In July, Mr. Higginson's niece, Mrs. George R. Agassiz, had suggested that he ought to write his Reminiscences. His reply was most characteristic: —

. . . As to your suggestion about reminiscences, those about you and various other pleasant people are delightful, but many of my reminiscences are anything but pleasant. I have made so many mistakes, and done so many foolish things, and thrown away so many good chances that I cannot take any particular joy in my life. As to what has been done, that was all in the day's work. I have received more credit in my lifetime than I ever deserved. Did I ever tell you that, if I had not been married, I proposed staying in the army, and, by this time, would have been a retired old veteran, growling at everything. I enjoyed my army life, and, on the whole, did it better than anything else — that is, I was a good regimental officer, but could not have gone above the command of a thousand men. I've not been a good business man, but have come through somehow or other. Yes, I can remember many things within my European life which were interesting to me, and some of them are so still, but they would do nobody any good, and I think they would entertain nobody. . . . To write the Life or Reminiscences of a man like Alex Agassiz is one thing. But after all, there is too much written and too much printed, and it is very difficult indeed to avoid egotism.

Nevertheless, he set to work, as the passages already utilized in this volume have shown, and in spite of the fragmentary nature of the forty or fifty pages which he dictated, his

recollections were remarkably distinct in detail and racy in style.

But Major Higginson's chief occupation, after all, during the summer and autumn of 1918, was in following the events of the World War. From Marshal Foch's appointment as supreme commander, in March, to the victory of the Allies in November, the Major watched every bulletin. His comments upon that final phase of the military struggle illuminate his character and convictions. Some of the most interesting of his letters are addressed to English friends. To show how completely the international situation had altered within three years, take first this passage from a letter written to Mr. Higginson by Professor Gilbert Murray in 1915:—

OXFORD, May 30, 1915.

. . . I cannot tell you how strongly I agree with what you say about the relations of Great Britain and America. Historically there is a great deal to get over between the two nations. The Tory ministry of George III treated you very badly, and did so just in the way that a proud nation is never likely to forget. And again in your Civil War the English upper classes sneered at you and more or less openly sided with the South. And even in the Spanish War there was a section of English society which was anti-American, though it hardly dared to say so in public. And similarly now there are silly people who go about cursing Wilson as a coward or a hypocrite.

The important fact to remember is, I think, that the blind old Tory element in England has been steadily weakening and is now — unless the war should give it a chance of reviving — very nearly negligible in public affairs. Even during the War of Independence the Chathamite Whigs kept up a vehement pro-American agitation. By the time of your Civil War the Liberal feeling was strong enough to prevent any overt action against you, and the working classes were genuinely enthusiastic for you. In the Spanish War I observed

that even the Tory papers hardly dared to utter their feelings: their public would not have tolerated it.

And now — well, I think that what happens is chiefly a matter of mere irritation. Our nerves are strained. We wake up feeling strained and angry, and then look about for someone to be angry with. There is not much fun in abusing Germans; so some people abuse Lord Haldane or Lord Kitchener, and others let themselves loose on President Wilson or on America in general. And of course there is a certain undercurrent of the ordinary irritation that always exists between any two groups of people: between Englishmen and Scotchmen, or between Yale and Harvard. It is very silly and mischievous, but it is human nature.

The feeling with us utilizes as a basis the old Tory contempt for democrats and people with an accent different from the Belgravian accent, and so on. The feeling with you seems to me much more serious. It utilizes the old feeling against England the Tyrant; the Irish feeling of revenge for ancient wrongs, and so on. I have been struck to notice how on our stage the conventional American is nearly always a sympathetic character, — generous and daring and cool and inscrutable; whereas on your stage the conventional Englishman is nearly always unpleasing. We pay for our bad conduct in the past, and cannot complain. What I should like to have more realized in America is that we are not a bit like the England of George III; we really are a progressive and democratic nation. The trouble is that the persons who travel in America are, naturally, chiefly the rich and conservative classes.

About the present crisis, I think Wilson has acted extraordinarily well. At moments I have been anxious; for instance, when there was the proposal for you to buy the German ships. From your point of view I think you are right to stay out of the war as long as ever you can honorably do so. From our point of view I wish you were in. Your navy would be a great help, and your economic resources would make the Allies invincible. . . .

Take next a passage from a letter written to the Major on April 20, 1917, — just after our entrance into the war, — by General Sir George Wentworth Higginson,<sup>1</sup> an English cousin of the Boston Higginsons.

"To-day you and all of you good people, our kinsmen in the West, have been uppermost in my thoughts, for I attended this morning a most impressive service at St. Paul's Cathedral, of which you will have received a full account in your newspapers long before you read this letter. In the course of my long life I have been present on many memorable occasions at services of a special character at our great Cathedral, the earliest in my memory being the funeral of the Duke of Wellington sixty-five years ago, when I commanded the Guard of Honor which stood reverently at the Western Door when his remains were laid in their resting-place under the Dome. But I do not remember having ever been more impressed than I was this morning. I sat with my daughter in the Chancel, the view of the Dome being broken by the two huge banners — the Stars and Stripes and the Union Jack, which hung side by side, as if inviting the crowd of representatives of America and Britain to enter the sacrarium as brothers with pledges of undying friendship at the Altar, where the chief dignitary of our Church, the Archbishop of Canterbury, stood prepared to ratify the vows. The heartiness with which your National Hymn and the Star-Spangled Banner were sung left no doubt of the sincerity with which this proof of brotherhood was sealed, and the ringing notes of God Save the King fitly concluded a dedication ceremony which will go far towards cementing the alliance of which our two nations have now given practical proof in undertaking to restore peace to the world. . . . You will be glad to know that my pride in my dear old Regiment, the Grenadier Guards, has gained strength as every despatch referring to them arrives from the fighting line. . . ."

<sup>1</sup> Author of *Seventy-one Years of a Guardsman's Life*, London, 1916. He is now (1921) in his 95th year.

Major Higginson's own letter of May 3, 1917, to Dr. Harvey Cushing, who was sailing for the Front with the Harvard Medical Unit, was almost as exultant as the English Guardsman's:—

. . . As a nation, by degrees we seem to be waking up to the seriousness of the situation. I marvel very much that the country has not seen it before, for it is a world's struggle and nothing less. But it is of no use to cry about "spilt milk." This is our way: we bet on our luck, and some day we shall be left. Perhaps this is the time. Never mind whether the Germans are putting up a bluff or not; never mind about anything except down once and for all the Hohenzollerns and Hapsburgs, releasing the German people from the tutelage under which they have been kept. I lived among them too long not to have great respect for them as a people,—for their past, and I hope for their future,—but it seems as if the devil had got into them during these last two or three years. Meanwhile, the spirit of the French, English and Russians is wonderful. . . . You know that we are all playing the same game, and that life has no value to us if we cannot keep our principles and show them to the world. If men do not want them, we cannot help it, but we can show their beauty and their strength. I could have cried last night to see you going away with all the other fine chaps, and at the same time we can crow with pride. . . .

By March, 1918, he was sobered, like all thoughtful men, by "the terrible waste" of armies. He wrote to Dr. Harvey Cushing, March 7:—

. . . Do you know, one of my first thoughts when on the Continent at the age of 18 was the terrible waste of the armies of all those nations. It took just so many men away from work, and took just so much money to support those men, which

money the poor people and the rich people had to supply; and, after all, the burden comes on the poor people. That was sixty-five years ago, and the thought has been growing with me ever since. If you could have the waste that goes on, you could have a hundred hospitals like the Peter Bent Brigham. After all, we can only consider this world and this life a school, to learn something better, and get ready to lead a more decent life than we can lead here. . . .

When the German lines began to break at last, he saw the confirmation of his life-long faith in the "ultimate decency of things." Passages from a few of his letters follow.

To Mrs. George R. Agassiz, August 21, 1918:—

. . . Until it is beaten out of the stupid German head that they are something more than the common run of us, nothing will be gained; and I do think the making of peace may be harder than the war. Of course they have plenty of education, such as it is; but without a certain amount of humility and a certain acknowledgment of one's weakness and follies, how can anyone make any progress in this world. . . .

To Miss Minna Farrer, daughter of his old friend Sir William Farrer, August 22, 1918:—

. . . There never has been a question in my mind as to who began the war and who wished it. To me almost the worst part of it all is the scheming and scheming through years and years to get possession of this and that thread and to pull them all over the earth in order to compass their ends. They want power, power, entirely forgetting the responsibility that goes with it, believing that they stood next to God Almighty and had his especial approval, which is the worst blasphemy that ever reached my ears. I have always been sorry that,

when the Lusitania was sunk, we did not immediately send the German Minister home and clear out the country of a lot of Germans who were here and trying to make trouble. But the country was not awake, was not aroused; it is very large, there are all sorts of people through the West and the South, and they did not care about it and did not feel as hurt as they should. As the war has gone on, our people have become more and more interested in the struggle, and the President has kept pace with them, and has represented fairly progress made. I doubt if he could have led them much faster than he has, and I do think he has shown great ability and has been very firm in his expression of views; in short, he has the country behind him, which is no such easy thing to do in a large and free country like ours. . . . You may not know that I have lived six or seven years of my life in Germany and Austria, particularly in the latter country, and enjoyed the life very much, knowing many people very well and living only with them and not with our country people or yours — indeed, I rarely ever spoke to an Englishman during my life there. I knew very well the stupidity and arrogance of the Germans, particularly in Prussia, but I did not suppose they were such infernal brutes, calculating, premeditating, brutal, cruel, stupid. And just now the U-boats are irritating our people very much indeed, for they are sinking a lot of fishing boats, on which this part of the country relies considerably. The Massachusetts fishermen going to the Coast of Newfoundland and thereabouts make their living by catching codfish and bringing it here to be salted and eaten. It has been a business for a great many years, and will continue so. They are a hardy, resolute set of men, and it is more than senseless for the Germans to sink those boats, for every boat sunk makes a thousand enemies. . . . It seems to me not unlikely that, when it is all over, the different nations will feel better about each other, that you will have toward America a kindlier feeling than you have ever had, that we shall have a kindlier feeling toward

you, and the same between France, Italy and your country and ours, etc. When the war began, I wondered whether this national feeling and international feeling would not spread so as to make the people more amiable. If you live on one side of the street and I live on the other and we cannot speak to each other, it seems a pity; and, after all, the ocean is nothing but a street. . . .

To Mrs. George R. Agassiz, September 26, 1918:—

. . . I hold to my belief of thirty years past, that Germany will have a great upset; that there will be a great revolution, not necessarily a bloody one, but a great change in the status of different classes of people. . . .

To W. R. Malcolm, Esq., of London, October 18, 1918:—

. . . Apparently we are getting through with this thing. We certainly have not won the war as yet, but it does seem to me that the Germans have lost it. The war may drag on, but the Germans cannot win, although they may still do us a great deal of harm; and the more harm they do, the longer bill they will have to pay. . . . Meanwhile, I should think the war would result in a very close union between your country, France and ourselves; and if we stand by each other, it will be very difficult for the world to kick up such a row again. . . .

When I think how the world has changed since I first went to Europe in 1853, I am amazed: sixty-five years, and everything is different. I also remember thinking when there, how on earth the nations were going to pay for all the soldiers and all the armies. If they had not had them, Europe might have been much further along in prosperity; and now I hope that all these things are going to be greatly reduced. . . .

To Miss Minna Farrer, October 22, 1918:—

. . . Since you wrote, the news has all been good, and I believe it will be much better. I cannot see how the Germans, if they have any sense at all, can go on. It is evident they are in a very uncomfortable condition at home, as well as in the Army. A great change in Germany is imminent, and in Austria, and, as it seems to me, it is sure to come. I have thought so for many years, and think the bell is ringing for this change. . . . Meanwhile, this struggle has brought your country, France and ours closer together than anything else could have done, and I hope we shall remain so. It would seem as if there were no more reason for disputes ending in quarrels between our three countries than there would be between you, your father, and me. All this quarreling is really a horrid waste of time, of life-blood and of happiness and goodness. As the war has gone on, our people have become more and more united in their purpose to put things on a proper basis. Throughout much of the country many men and women have not understood the point of the whole thing, but they do see it, and they want nothing except decent conduct of affairs throughout the world. . . .

To his partner, Sir Hugh G. Levick, November 1, 1918:—

DEAR HUGH:—

The shabbiest thing to be said is: "I told you so"; but do you mind my saying it about this war. I did tell my wife in August, 1914, that the Germans would be beaten. The British nation may be thrashed but not beaten, and we all knew it; the French nation were fighting for their homes, and had astonishing brains and courage; the French Army had learned its business, and we see it in their performances. As for our own despised soldiers, you and I knew that our men could be made into excellent soldiers in a short time and would fight

like tigers; they have an entirely different spirit from the Germans; they are not slaves or subjects, but are citizens, and they know it. . . . Now I hope that men will remember that vengeance is not worth while. It will not re-create French and Belgian homes to burn the German homes. If I had it to settle, the Germans would pay to France and Belgium a huge sum, more especially to Belgium for the money stolen and homes ruined. The Germans cannot rebuild the beautiful palaces and libraries, but they can pay a great sum for them. I would take all the German ships, including her Navy, and I would take all her gold and perhaps silver; in short, I would [not] exercise vengeance, but I would ask to have the bill paid and see that it was done. As for the gang of Hohenzollerns and Hapsburgs, the world has no use at all for them; the simple thing would be to shoot them all; there is no place to put them where they will be harmless. . . .

My boy has been in a remount camp as second in command of seven or eight thousand horses and a large number of men, and now he has been promoted to be chief in command of a remount camp near Chicago. George<sup>1</sup> has one son (a sophomore) in camp, and everybody has a finger in the pie, and rejoices in it. I have had hard work to get hold of my nieces, who are many, because they are doing public work. . . . Concerning this old log, he is useless; he has made no gain for sixty days, is in bed at this minute, has a great deal of pain, and does not know whether he will ever get free from it. His pain is aggravated by the thought that it has not been necessary. But I was so kicked and cuffed last year that I lost my temper and balance, and fretted until the machinery gave way. But we all get something good or bad, and I have had enough of the good, and must take my medicine. As Frank Higginson said to me the other day: "Perhaps we would better make up our minds that we are old men and are useless for work and for fun." It is most lucky for me that I dropped

<sup>1</sup> Major Higginson's nephew.

the Orchestra last year, for I could not possibly have carried the thing on, with its many cares and worries. One thing about it pleases me that people do not know: many a year I have wondered whether I could pay the bills, and have always risked it. It was an engagement for several hundred thousand in a season, and I had to take what came, never knowing what the losses would be. The loss in any year might have been \$100,000 or more, and in those first years I usually had not more than \$300,000 or \$400,000. Of course it was foolish, but nobody ever accused me of wisdom. I have been kept in the firm out of good feeling. Meanwhile, a letter has just come from Mr. Root of a nature which would make any man proud, and nobody within knowledge has ever been treated as I was at that dinner in November, 1914. . . .

To James Ford Rhodes, November 10, 1918 (the day before the signing of the Armistice): —

. . . Think of peace! lovely peace! May I tell you, dear friend, that from Aug. 1st, 1914, I've never doubted the overthrow of these accursed families and their gangs. They were wrong and could not, would not, read the signs of the times. In 1852 I lived in Germany first, saw their ways, charms, treasures, stupidities, waste of men and money in their armies, — which were at that time supports for their thrones and follies, — and it seemed that they must change or *we* were wrong — and the latter I could not believe. For I worshiped our country. A boy of 18 must love something as well as somebody. Therefore I've expected for many years a revolution — peaceful or bloody — and it has come. No words will express the joy. It is Sunday and so I am preaching. . . . Think of the debts, the indemnities to be paid — the banks suspended, the coal and iron gone which has enriched them, ships taken, hogs and cattle eaten, etc. It must be hell. If you sup with the devil, etc. These men can't believe in consequences. . . .

To Sir Hugh Levick, November 15, 1918:—

DEAR HUGH:—

On Monday morning at five o'clock, — that is before light, — the whistles began to blow and the bells to ring, and they did not stop for twenty-four hours. In the streets on Monday and Tuesday there was a fearful crowd and jamboree, long processions, meetings, speeches, music, — and the relief and joy were very great. Of course the Exchanges were closed as the only safe course. Comments are unnecessary. Two or three lines keep coming to me. One of them is Mr. Lowell's ode when the Harvard men came home from the Civil War. One stanza begins: "Bow down, dear land, for thou hast found release," and it is so strong that I never repeat it without my voice breaking. Another is the beginning of Mrs. Howe's poem: "Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord." You who lived so long in this country feel about these lines as I do, not because of your sojourn here, but because you are a man with lots of red blood, who has done his part. . . .

On November 18, 1918, came Major Higginson's eighty-fourth birthday. It was marked by the gift of the great album from his friends, prefaced by the letter from President Eliot which has already been printed in chapter x. The reply follows here:—

*November 18, 1918.*

DEAR FRIEND:—

Thank you. No gift can now be more welcome or splendid or more comforting even to tears. Never a suggestion of it has reached me, and no words will express my deep sense of gratitude to you for your kind and noble words and to the host of friends, who have put their names to your message. Again I thank you for this with all my heart.

As you know, the orchestra-work arose from a dream of years, a hope, an ideal, a duty, and one to warrant great

risk, and never mind the price in labor or anxiety or failure.

Your own life has proved your faith, and the same is true of many mates of ours, alive and dead.

It is our country and our century, and we do our best. All the more welcome, satisfying are your words and this precious book — to my wife and to me.

Thank you and all our friends.

Yours affectionately,

H. L. HIGGINSON.

An equally serene retrospect of the whole work of the Orchestra is found in this letter to Mr. Gericke, December 28, 1918:—

. . . Now that this war is finished, I can write to you and express the strong hope that you all four are well and content. But first let me say this: When people speak of the Boston Symphony Orchestra and of its beauty, its style, its perfection, they add: "Gericke made the Orchestra." I have known and said this for many years past. Philip Hale repeated it at the Tavern Club dinner last week; Dr. Muck said it to me in Berlin in 1910, and has said it again — "Gericke made the Orchestra." To me this means much, for do you know a better orchestra? Has any orchestra in existence played more concerts or more variety of music, or to more audiences? Has any orchestra done more to stimulate good music in any land, or given more peace and happiness? I know of none; and if this is true, Wilhelm Gericke has been a great benefactor to men, women and children of our day. We have given perhaps four thousand concerts. Last May I gave up the Orchestra, and it is now in the hands of an able committee, who are managing it well and giving excellent concerts. All the Germans have been dropped, and the Austrians kept. Rabaud, an admirable French conductor, is at the head, and the work should go on well. But I often long for a concert such as you gave us — Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert. Only a

Wiener Kind can play Schubert. You, Nikisch, and Muck were great conductors, and the others were good. I like to say these things to you, because you have deserved them and because you are remembered by many, many people with deep respect and affection. Thank Heaven this war is over. It was not necessary, could have led to no good end, and the result of it was sure — so I always believed. We, as a nation, were sure to take part, and the power was on our side. It has injured the Germans terribly in the eyes of the other nations. As for Austria, it was clear that she could not hold together if the Slavs wished otherwise. Now, what next? Bernstorff and Dernburg acted very badly here, and should have been sent away much earlier. Tell me about friends in Vienna. I heard long ago that Epstein had died. How about the Millers? I ask you to greet kindly any friends of mine in Vienna. They must be old, as I am — eighty-four. . . . The Tavern Club is as pleasant as ever, and the men often speak of you with affection. I see how much disturbance there is in Germany and in Austria, and hope that affairs will be adjusted and you will have peace. . . .

He could also look back without bitterness, now, to the long anxieties in State Street. He had written to Sir Hugh Levick on August 2, 1918, this cheerful and philosophical message to a young partner in his London house: —

. . . If X ever said a word to me, I should tell him this: I have always played second fiddle or third fiddle since I have been down-town. I have been the senior for a great many years, and was the practical senior for a great many years more, but there has always been in the firm an abler man than I, — indeed, a much abler man, — and now there are half a dozen better. I do like to be treated with consideration, which has not always been the case, but that came from carelessness more than anything else. I certainly have been treated with great kindness. But I do think that for most people the place

of second fiddle is preferable to first fiddle. If only a man will consider the success of the work of the firm, of the government, of the country, rather than of himself, he will probably reach the same conclusion. If I were X, I should not care whether I was first or fifth in the firm, so I was kindly treated and got my share of what was going. . . . Certain qualities I have, and they may have helped to the success of the firm; but, after all, it was founded by George Lee's grandfather,— who was a very noble old man,— and my dad,— who was honest, tolerably keen, full of common sense, and irascible at times and pleasant at times,— and also by Mr. Henry Lee, whose character was as spotless as that of the others. To them must be added old George Lee, who was a sunbeam, faithful to the last degree, and a man whom nobody ever doubted for a quarter of a second. It was they who made the firm, and I have merely followed in their path. I am not thinking of my own value. I have thought too much of my duties and wishes outside and too little of the firm. If, instead of spending all the money that has been spent outside, I had kept it, I should have five or six millions to-day, and very likely more. But it is all in the day's work. . . .

During the five years, 1914–1919, many of Henry Higginson's old friends slipped away. His sister-in-law, Mrs. Quincy Shaw (Pauline Agassiz), died in 1916: a Lady Bountiful whose labors for kindergartens, day nurseries, and industrial schools will long be remembered in Boston. Mr. Higginson liked the kindly Boston custom of writing brief obituary notices for the "Transcript," and among the friends whose passing was thus commemorated by him were Henry Dalton, Gardiner M. Lane, John P. Lyman, John C. Gray, William Endicott, Ezra Thayer, George Gardner, and Charles J. Paine. For commemorative services by the Loyal Legion he wrote sketches of Colonel Arnold Rand and of Colonel Thomas L. Livermore, and for the Massachusetts Historical Society a sketch of another old comrade, Charles Francis Adams. Of Senator

Lodge's notable memorial address on Mr. Adams, delivered in November, 1915, Mr. Higginson wrote thus:—

**MY DEAR CABOT:—**

It was beyond words, so full, so true, so tender, and I could not find a word for you to say so — but you know.

Not a word too much, or wrong, and such a just, warm appreciation of a noble, dear friend. Each, every side was there, and it is a great tribute in a lovely form. With Charles's ways and idle chaff, I've always been filled with a full sense of his modesty, which all men did not recognize. To no one in my life have I spoken more freely about himself — and he simply bowed his head. It is idle to say I knew him, yet it seems to me so. Therefore I again say, nothing left out, not a word or a hint not fully true and beautifully given to us forever.

It seems a great gift to me, who had another gift at your hands last year, November 18, which seemed to me too great. Thank you. As a gift to many people and as an oration of wonderful beauty, you have blessed us all.

The first hymn has been running in my head this week and I got out of bed and played it last night — and then our old Commencement hymn. I feel all clean now — purified — and I hope that the day has brought you some comfort — dear old man. Your affectionate

H. L. HIGGINSON.

Love to Sturgis [Bigelow]. I want that first hymn at my funeral.

Mr. Higginson's note of condolence to Henry Adams on the death of his brother Charles brought this response:—

*Sunday, 21 [March, 1915].*

**DEAR HENRY:—**

Thanks! It was I who expected the summons: it was he who got it; but there will be no great difference. I fancy we were both ready.

Indeed, I fancy we were somewhat more than ready. The world had changed too much, and he felt it.

Anyway, good-bye for both, and love to you all.

Ever truly,

HENRY ADAMS.

When Henry Adams died at the age of eighty, in March, 1918, Henry Higginson wrote to Senator Lodge:—

DEAR CABOT:—

Our friends are fading away, and we shall miss none more than Henry Adams. He was a remarkable man in many ways, and was a very true, kind, thoughtful friend to you and me, as well as to many others. His method of entertaining — his table open always to his friends — was delightful; and whenever I think of the house, I think of Mrs. Lodge there, coming and going as if it were her own house. I wish he had had more physical vigor, for he might have accomplished more; but I think no one can overrate the great good which Mr. Adams, when Ambassador in England during the Civil War, did for our country; and Henry no doubt was his right-hand man. He has left behind him various proofs of his ability — and he had a house beyond compare for charm. Dear me, I can say nothing to you about him which is not repeating your own thoughts. . . .

But he never wrote with more delicate feeling than on the occasion of the death of Henry James. The note is addressed to Henry James the younger, nephew of the novelist.

BOSTON, *March 1st, 1916.*

DEAR HARRY:—

It must have been a quiet end to a useful life — with your mother and sister at his bedside — to bid him good-bye.

It brings to mind his delightful tale or romance of the “Great Good Place.”

He has found it and is freed from the terrible present day. He had many lovers, men and women — and they will always hold him very dear — and be very grateful for his sympathy and love and for his great charm.

One always wonders if a friend has had a happy life, but at least Harry made many people happy and also interested in his views of life. I hope to be included among his lovers, and that your father's and mother's children will remember me as such and as a lover of their two parents. Sometimes you have thought me extravagant in phrase about you all — but my words have been less than my thought and feelings about you all — and if they seem too strong, remember that the halo and the charm of the elders lie on your heads. Why not? Good-bye and love to you one and all.

Your affectionate

H. L. HIGGINSON.

It must not be thought, however, that the mood of Henry Higginson's last years was elegiac. He loved his friends and mourned their passing, but he was always averse to indulgence in grief. For himself, he craved only the "wages of going on." He wanted to give every ounce there was in him, before his own time came. In the early months of 1919 he was in the hospital again, but even there he was planning for the proper celebration of Memorial Day at Harvard. He wrote to William C. Lane, President of the Harvard Memorial Society:—

There must be among the younger men somebody who would warm everybody — and on that occasion we need somebody who has a great deal of fire, discretion and poetry in him. . . . Do not turn to old men; they freeze up, although Wendell Holmes will never freeze, or Root either.

This was in January, and a month later, while still in the hospital, he wrote to Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes:—

DEAR WENDELL:—

Thinking of our jubilee when we came home in 1865, and of the beauty of several things,—Governor Andrew's address, Phil Brooks's prayer and, more than all, James Lowell's wonderful ode,—I have dreamed of a like jubilee to the men who have now come home; and next Commencement seems to be the time for it. The men of the time I know tolerably, and no one seems to me so fit as you to say the warm word, full of feeling and poetry, full of patriotism and of common sense, with a fine feeling toward the future. . . .

Major Higginson was unable to attend the meeting of the Associated Harvard Clubs at Buffalo in May, but wrote them an eloquent greeting. He presided at Cambridge on Memorial Day, but the effort was obviously too great for him. During the summer he gained in strength, and even chopped and tramped and bought cattle with his son. His letters — mainly dictated now — were as vigorous as ever. The perennial railroad question interested him deeply. He wrote stirring communications about the Harvard Endowment Fund to Eliot Wadsworth, Chairman of the Committee. Concerning the Versailles Treaty he wrote to Miss Minna Farrer on July 24, 1919:—

. . . I am hoping that the Treaty, which does not suit me in all ways, will be signed by our nation, and then that we shall go on. What we all need is to get to work, and we here are already at it. But we want to have all the worry possible removed, and we want Germany and France to get to work. If a man toils all day, he will not be so restless for something else. Our own objections here to various points in the Treaty may be right, and I dare say they are, but I would sign now and give notice that we want the changes made; and, inasmuch as we agree with you and France, I have no doubt it can be managed. It does not seem to me that China has been properly treated, and one never knows about the Japanese, what

they will do or what they will bear. As for this country, it has grown too fast; and a nation is like young people — selfish in regarding itself alone. I think that feeling is disappearing, and at any rate it must disappear. We have become a power in the world and cannot avoid the responsibility. . . .

He hoped that the United States would join the League of Nations — writing thus to President Pritchett on August 5:—

. . . As regards the League of Nations: to a man ignorant of details, as I am, it would seem that there were many objections to be raised to the treaty as made, but I am clear about this: that our course is to vote it through and get it going and get the world going, and shut up; then we will either alter it or we will quit. But of course various additions and changes will be made. . . .

At the opening of Harvard in September, he addressed the new students for the last time. On Sunday, October 5, he was able to attend the ceremony of conferring a Harvard degree upon Albert, King of the Belgians, in University Hall. He seemed too weary to stand or speak, but when he was presented to Queen Elizabeth, he bowed over her hand with the grace and gallantry of a boy. On the following day he attended a similar ceremony in Cambridge, in honor of Cardinal Mercier; but at the reception at President Lowell's he remained seated. Again he was in the hospital, but recovered sufficiently to attend the dinner of the Friday Club on November 7. He was obviously feeble, but in good spirits. On Thursday the 13th of November, his son being in town, the whole family were together at dinner. The next morning, although he had had a painful night, he dictated letters as usual: to Congressman Winslow and to Mr. Howard Elliott on the railroad situation, to Mrs. John Markoe on the American Academy at Rome, and to Professor Barrett Wendell — a fourteen-page letter already quoted in part — on the early

history of Lee, Higginson and Co. During the morning it was decided that his physical condition made another immediate operation desirable, and he went back to the Massachusetts General Hospital, accompanied by his wife and son. His son remembered later that Henry Higginson had refused to go down in the elevator from his apartment to the street. He walked down the four flights, with head erect, like those comrades of his boyhood of whom he had once written that "quietly and happily, with their eyes fixed on the sun, they rode into the valley of death and never came back." His wife and son remained with him to the end, but he never regained consciousness after the operation, and before that November evening ended, he was gone. Had he lived four days longer, he would have been eighty-five.

On Monday, November 17, he was buried from Appleton Chapel, where he had been married nearly fifty-six years before. Members of the Symphony Orchestra played Handel's Largo in D Major, and there was organ music from Brahms and Bach, and the University Hymn sung by the College choir. The American flag draped the coffin, and on it rested the sword which Major Higginson had carried in the Civil War. Then, between the long files of undergraduates standing with uncovered heads, he was borne to Mount Auburn, where he rests in peace.

One who was honored by his friendship and has striven to tell the story of his life may be permitted to salute him in the words used by Charles Russell Lowell in a boyish letter to Henry Higginson on March 13, 1858: "*I often think of you, sir, and wish to see the light of your removed countenance. Good-bye.*"

THE END



## APPENDIX

### THE SOLDIER'S FIELD

OVER four hundred students and graduates of Harvard University assembled in Sever Hall on the evening of June 10, 1890, to hear about "The Soldier's Field," which had been given to the University by Mr. Henry L. Higginson.

PRESIDENT ELIOT spoke as follows:—

GENTLEMEN: At a meeting of the Corporation yesterday, the following letter was presented:—

BOSTON, June 5th, 1890.

*To the President and Fellows of Harvard College, Cambridge.*

GENTLEMEN: The deeds of Miss Willard's estate will be passed to you today, and with them my wish in regard to it.

The estate henceforth belongs to the College without any condition or restriction whatsoever, and for use in any way which the Corporation may see fit.

My hope is that the ground will be used for the present as a playground for the students, and that, in case you should need the ground by and by for other purposes, another playground will be given to the students.

But the gift is absolutely without condition of any kind.

The only other wish on my part is that the ground shall be called "The Soldier's Field," and marked with a stone bearing the names of some dear friends, — alumni of the University, and noble gentlemen, — who gave freely and eagerly all that they had or hoped for, to their country and to their fellow men in the hour of great need — the war of 1861 to 1865 in defence of the Republic.

JAMES SAVAGE, JR.,  
CHARLES RUSSELL LOWELL,  
EDWARD BARRY DALTON,  
STEPHEN GEORGE PERKINS,  
JAMES JACKSON LOWELL,  
ROBERT GOULD SHAW.

This is only a wish, and not a condition; and, moreover, it is a happiness to me to serve in any way the College, which has done so much for us all.

I am, with much respect,

Very truly yours,

HENRY L. HIGGINSON.

You are too young to remember these men, but I remember them all. They were all young, — the youngest about 26, — about the same age as the men in our professional schools. They were all schoolmates, college classmates, or intimate friends of Mr. Higginson. He who gives you this field was at College here, and afterward studied in Europe. He enlisted in the infantry at the breaking out of the Rebellion, was transferred to the cavalry, and, after serving faithfully, had to leave the service in 1864 from the effects of his wounds. His six friends died; he lived, became a successful man of business, and has made the best possible uses of his money. He has promoted music in Boston as no other man ever has. This gift which he now makes to you is very near his heart, for, in giving you this land, he feels that he is doing what his friends would have liked to have him do. He wishes to promote manly sports among you, and to commemorate the soldier of 1861. He has come here to-night to tell you of his wish and his hope.

MR. HIGGINSON then said: —

I thank you for receiving me here to-night, and I thank President Eliot for his kind words. I have come to tell you of my reasons for helping you to a playground, and of my wish to link with it my thoughts of the past and my hopes for your future. The story which I have to tell is moving to me, and, if my voice fails, I can only ask you for a hand.

It has been evident for some time that the College playgrounds were too small, and therefore the Corporation of the University and your Athletic Committee have sought to enlarge them. Just across the river, toward Brighton, lie some beautiful marshes in a lovely surrounding of hills, woods, and water, in which Mr. Longfellow used to delight as he gazed at them from his windows; and which he and other friends gave to the College, with the provision that they should be kept open and used for play, if wanted for that purpose. Last summer these marshes were surveyed in order to learn the practicability of draining and using them. But, the other day, when an approach to them was needed, the owner of the adjoining estate refused to sell the right of way. So the Corporation looked at the land of this recalcitrant owner, and considered its value for your games and for its own future needs. The estate lies just across the Brighton Bridge, to the right, and takes in about twenty-one acres of upland pasture and about ten acres of marsh, — in all about thirty-one acres, — with a couple of houses. The Corporation approved of the

land and has acquired it. Do you approve also? I hope so, and, if it suits you, one point will have been gained. You will have a walk to it, but not long enough to weary strong men. Try the ground and see if it is good for your uses.

It is very pleasant to do you a kindness, and everyone is glad of a chance to serve the dear old College. She needs help, and thought, and devotion, and gratitude from us all, for she has given us and our land more than any one of us will give back. She will keep on giving; and I now ask a kindness of her.

This field means more than a playground to me, for I ask to make it a memorial to some dear friends who gave their lives, and all that they had or hoped for, to their country and to their fellow men in the hour of great need — the War of the Rebellion. They gave their lives in the cause of virtue and good government, and to save our nation from the great sins of disunion and of slavery. This is what we claim for our northern men.

These friends were men of mark, either as to mental or moral powers, or both, and were dead in earnest about life in all its phases. They lived in happy homes and were surrounded with friends, mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers, sweethearts — had high hopes for the future and with good cause, too; but, at the first call of our great captain, Abraham Lincoln, they went at once, gladly, eagerly, to the front, and stayed there. Not a doubt, not a thought of themselves, except to serve; and they did serve to the end, and were happy in their service.

They were men of various talents and they had various fortunes.

One of them was first scholar in his class — thoughtful, kind, affectionate, gentle, full of solicitude about his companions, and about his duties. He was wounded in a very early fight of the war, and, after his recovery and a hard campaign on the peninsula, was killed at Glendale on the 4th of July, '62. Hear his own words: "When the class meets in years to come and honors its statesmen and judges, its divines and doctors, let also the score who went to fight for their country be remembered, and let not those who never returned be forgotten." If you had known JAMES LOWELL, you would never have forgotten him.

Another I first saw one evening in our first camp at Brook Farm — a beautiful, sunny-haired, blue-eyed boy, gay and droll, and winning in his ways. In those early days of camp-life, we fellows were a bit homesick and longed for the company of girls, — you know how it is yourselves, — and I fell in love with this boy, and I have not fallen

out yet. He was of a very simple and manly nature, — steadfast and affectionate, human to the last degree, — without much ambition except to do his plain duty. You should have seen ROBERT SHAW as he, with his chosen officers, led away from Boston his black men of the 54th Massachusetts amid the cheers of his townsmen. Presently he took them up to the assault of Fort Wagner, and was buried with them there in the trench.

Still another fine, handsome fellow, great oarsman, charming companion, wit, philosopher, who delighted in intellectual pursuits, and in his fellow creatures, whom he watched with his keen eyes and well understood, was killed in a foolish, bloody battle while stemming the tide of defeat. He was at this time too ill to march; but, with other sick officers, left the ambulances because he was needed in this fight. I well remember almost our last day together — sitting on a log in a sluggish stream in Maryland, washing ourselves and our clothes, and then drying ourselves in the sun — and his wonderful talk of the delights of an intellectual life. That was his realm, and no one in our young days did more to mould his mates than STEPHEN PERKINS did.

Yet another — a first scholar, because he could n't help it — full of thought, life, and intense vigor — brimful of ideas — brilliant and strong beyond compare — had soon after leaving College exhausted himself by overwork. After distinguished service with his regiment and on the staff of General McClellan, who singled him out for honor, he led his troopers of the Second Massachusetts Cavalry in the Shenandoah campaign of '64, was always in the front, lost thirteen horses in his daring efforts to win success, and at last, when so wounded that he could not speak, rode forward in his last charge, when Sheridan had come back to win the battle of Cedar Creek. Read the story of that splendid campaign and see how even there the figure of CHARLES LOWELL stands out.

These friends were men of unusual powers, but they all bowed down to the goodness and the purity of one other — JAMES SAVAGE. He also was an enthusiast, and had little health and no words, — but ate himself up with his thoughts and his fiery wishes — sometimes as gay as a lark and then depressed from ill health and disappointment with himself — very fond of his books and of nature — much given to games and a great rusher at football from pure will-power and enthusiasm — courageous to the last degree. We two fellows went to Fitchburg just after war was declared, to recruit a company for the Second Massachusetts Infantry; and when our regi-

ment was ready to march, the colors were entrusted to us. This recruiting was strange work to us all, and the men who came to our little recruiting office asked many new questions, which I did my best to answer; but often these recruits would turn to the "captain," as they called him, listen to his replies and then swear allegiance, as it were, to him. He, the quietest and most modest of men, was immensely impressive, for he was a real knight — just and gentle to all friends, defiant to the enemies of his country and to all wrongdoers. He also fell wounded in that most foolish battle, where his regiment lost fourteen out of twenty-two officers, and was sacrificed to the good of the army. He died in the hands of the enemy, who tended him kindly and were deeply moved by his patience and his fortitude.

The last was a physician, by choice and by nature, if intelligence, energy, devotion, and sweetness can help the sick. After various services from the outstart till '64, he was put by General Grant in charge of the great hospital camp at City Point in Virginia, where 10,000 sick and wounded men lay. Here he worked out his life-blood to save that of others. If I may turn to football language, he played "full-back," and no one ever reached the last goal if human power could stop him.

After the end of the war, New York City needed a vigorous medical officer to cleanse it and guard it against a threatened epidemic, and leading men turned to our friend for this work. General Grant was then in command of the army, and was asked to recommend this physician. But the General was weary of such requests, and refused without even knowing who the candidate was.

"But hear his name, at least," these citizens said; and they told it to him.

Grant at once wrote: "Dr. EDWARD DALTON is the best man in the United States for this place." And Dr. Dalton did one more public service and then settled into private life. Presently he died of disease brought on by exhaustion during the war.

All these men were dear friends to me; and with three of them I had lived from childhood on the most intimate terms, doing and discussing everything on earth, and in heaven, as boys will, — living, indeed, a very full life with them, and through them, — so full were they of thoughts, and hopes, and feelings, about all possible things. These men are a loss to the world, and heaven must have sorely needed them to have taken them from us so early in their lives. And now I ask to mark their names and memories on our new playground. Shall we call it "The Soldier's Field"? Of course, thousands and

thousands of other soldiers deserved equally well of their country, and should be equally remembered and honored by the world. I only say that these were my friends, and therefore I ask this memorial for them.

Mr. James Russell Lowell has, at my request, given me a few words of his own for the stone to be put up on this field, and also some lines of Mr. Emerson. I will read them to you:—

TO THE  
HAPPY MEMORY  
OF  
JAMES SAVAGE, JR.,  
CHARLES RUSSELL LOWELL,  
EDWARD BARRY DALTON,  
STEPHEN GEORGE PERKINS,  
JAMES JACKSON LOWELL,  
ROBERT GOULD SHAW,  
FRIENDS, COMRADES, KINSMEN, WHO DIED FOR THEIR  
COUNTRY,  
THIS FIELD IS DEDICATED.

“Though love repine, and reason chafe,  
There came a voice without reply,—  
‘T is man’s perdition to be safe,  
When for the truth he ought to die.”

And let me say here that the war was not boy’s play. No men of any country ever displayed more intelligence, devotion, energy, brilliancy, fortitude, in any cause than did our Southern brothers. Hunger, cold, sickness, wounds, captivity, hard work, hard blows — all these were their portion and ours. Look at the records of other wars and you’ll nowhere find examples of more courage in marching and fighting, or greater losses in camp or battle, than each side showed. We won because we had more substitutes and more supplies; and also from the force of a larger patriotism on our side. We wore them out. Let me tell you of just one case. A friend and comrade, leading his regiment in the last days of the war into Richmond, picked up a voluntary prisoner, and this is the conversation between them:—

“Why did you come in?”

“Well, me and the lieutenant was all there was left of the regiment, and yesterday the lieutenant was shot, and so I thought I might as well come in.”

It was not boy's play; and to-day these Southern brothers are as cordial and as kindly to us as men can be, as I have found by experience.

Now, what do the lives of our friends teach us? Surely the beauty and the holiness of work and of utter, unselfish, thoughtful devotion to the right cause, to our country, and to mankind. It is well for us all, for you and for the boys of future days, to remember such deeds and such lives and to ponder on them. These men loved study and work, and loved play too. They delighted in athletic games, and would have used this field, which is now given to the College and to you for your health and recreation. But my chief hope in regard to it is, that it will help to make you full-grown, well-developed men, able and ready to do good work of all kinds — steadfastly, devotedly, thoughtfully; and that it will remind you of the reason for living, and of your own duties as men and citizens of the Republic.

On you, and such as you, rests the burden of carrying on this country in the best way. From the day of John Harvard down to this hour, no pains or expense have been spared by teachers and by laymen to build up our University (and pray remember that it is our University — that it belongs to us — to you and to me), and thus educate you; and for what end? For service in your country and your fellow men in all sorts of ways — in all possible callings. Everywhere we see the signs of ferment — questions social, moral, mental, physical, economical. The pot is boiling hard and you must tend it, or it will run over and scald the world. For us came the great questions of slavery and of national integrity, and they were not hard to answer. Your task is more difficult, and yet you must fulfil it. Do not hope that things will take care of themselves, or that the old state of affairs will come back. The world on all sides is moving fast, and you have only to accept this fact, making the best of everything — helping, sympathizing, and so guiding and restraining others, who have less education, perhaps, than you. Do not hold off from them; but go straight on with them, side by side, learning from them and teaching them. It is our national theory and the theory of the day, and we have accepted it, and must live by it, until the whole world is better and wiser than now. You must in honor live by work, whether you need bread or not, and presently you will enjoy the labor. Remember that the idle and indifferent are the dangerous classes of the community. Not one of you would be here and would receive all that is given to you, unless many other men and women had worked hard for you. Do not too readily think

that you have done enough, simply because you have accomplished something. There is no enough, so long as you can better the lives of your fellow beings. Your success in life depends not on talents, but on will. Surely, genius is the power of working hard, and long, and well.

One of these friends, Charles Lowell, dead, and yet alive to me as you are, wrote me just before his last battle:—

“Don’t grow rich; if you once begin, you’ll find it much more difficult to be a useful citizen. Don’t seek office; but don’t ‘disremember’ that the useful citizen holds his time, his trouble, his money, and his life always ready at the hint of his country. The useful citizen is a mighty unpretending hero; but we are not going to have a country very long unless such heroism is developed. There! what a stale sermon I’m preaching! But, being a soldier, it does seem to me that I should like nothing so well as being a useful citizen.”

This was his last charge to me, and in a month he was in his grave. I have tried to live up to it, and I ask you to take his words to heart and to be moved and guided by them.

And just here let me, a layman, say a word to you experts in athletic sports. You come to College to learn things of great value besides your games, which, after all, are secondary to your studies. But, in your games, there is just one thing which you cannot do, even to win success. You cannot do one tricky or shabby thing. Translate tricky and shabby — dishonest, ungentlemanlike.

Princeton is not wicked; Yale is not base.

Lately I traveled with an ex-Southern artillery officer, and was rather glad that I did not try a year or two ago to take his guns. I asked him of his family, and he said: “I’ve just sent a boy to Yale, after teaching him all in my power. I told him to go away, and not to return with any provincial notions. Remember,” I said, “there is no Kentucky, no Virginia, no Massachusetts, but one great country.”

Mates, the Princeton and the Yale fellows are our brothers. Let us beat them fairly if we can, and believe that they will play the game just as we do.

Gentlemen, will you remember that this new playground will only be good if it is used constantly and freely by you all, and that it is a legacy from my friends to the dear old College, and so to you?

## **INDEX**



## INDEX

Throughout the index the initial H stands for H. L. Higginson. Letters are noted as such even though not more than brief extracts are printed. References to letters from and to Major Higginson will be found under the names of his several correspondents.

- AAR GLACIER, 32, 33.  
Abbott, Captain, 147, 165.  
Academy of Music (Boston), 297, 323.  
Adams, Charles Francis, Senior, 136, 523.  
Adams, Charles Francis, Jr., quoted, 21, 22; his *Life of R. H. Dana*, 87; his *Autobiography*, 156, 157 and n., 171 n., 218 n.; quoted, 166, 173; at Aldie, 195 and n.; on the Harvard Union, 351 and n.; Lodge's memorial address on, 522; letter of H. Adams on, 522; 23, 25, 147, 158, 161, 177, 185, 186, 214, 217 n., 219, 220, 221, 222, 223, 276, 279, 349 and n., 356, 404, 426, 461, 521. *Letters to H.*, 208, 215, 216, 217, 235, 326, 352, 353, 458.  
Adams, Henry, his *Education of Henry Adams*, 22, 23, 419, 420, 421; deals with Rodin, for H., 390, 419; H. quoted on his death, 523; 21, 25, 280, 281, 402, 411, 424. *Letters of, to H.*, 211, 419–423, 459, 522.  
Adams, Mrs. Henry, 280.  
Adams, John Q., 21, 24, 216, 349 n.  
Adams, Maude, 397.  
Agassiz, Alexander, marries Anna Russell, 210; and the Calumet and Hecla mines, 263, 264, 272; H. Adams and S. Weir Mitchell quoted on his death, 423; death of, 455; 8, 24, 32, 90, 209, 241, 242, 338, 347, 402, 422, 430, 433, 507.  
Agassiz, Anna (Russell), death of, 286.  
Agassiz, Cécile (Braun), first wife of Louis Agassiz, death of, 209; 275.  
Agassiz, Elizabeth Cary, second wife of Louis Agassiz, her *Life and Correspondence of Louis Agassiz*, 210; her school for girls, 210; and Radcliffe College, 327, 328; H.'s sketch of, 371; 167 n., 349. *Letter from H. to*, 393.  
Agassiz, George R., *Letters and Recollections of Alexander Agassiz*, 210, 263 n., 423 n.  
Agassiz, Ida, becomes engaged to H., 209 ff.; marries H., 213. And see Higginson, Ida A.  
Agassiz, Louis, his Museum founded, 133; death of, 286; 32, 33, 36, 178, 209, 210, 241, 327.  
Agassiz, Mabel (Simpkins), *Letters from H. to*, 465, 507, 512, 514.  
Agassiz, Pauline, 209, 210. And see Shaw, Pauline A.  
Agassiz School, the, 210, 327, 328.  
Albert, King of the Belgians, receives degree at Harvard, 526.  
Albert, Prince, 30.  
Alboni, Marietta, 75, 78.  
Alderman, Edwin A., 364.  
Aldie Gap, battle of, H. wounded at, 194 ff.; described by H. in his *Reminiscences*, 196–198; battlefield of, visited by H., 201 n.  
Aldrich, Nelson W., 406.  
Allen, A. V. G., *Life of Phillips Brooks*, 394 n.  
American Academy in Rome, 365.  
American Bell Telephone Co., 287, 431 and n., 448.  
American Economic Society, 447.  
"American Statesmen" series, 390.  
Ames, Frederick L., 345.  
Amory, William, 21, 24, 25, 61, 73.  
Andrew, John A., 144, 148, 156, 175, 181, 217 n., 219, 220, 237, 525.  
Andrews, G. L., 146, 149.  
Antietam, battle of, 167, 171, 172, 173 and n., 395.  
Anti-Imperialists, 428, 429.  
Apollo Club, 460.  
Appleton, Harriet, marries Greely S. Curtis, 216 n.  
Appleton Chapel, H. married in, 213; C. R. Lowell buried from, 232; H. buried from, 527; 393.  
Arbos, E. Fernandez, 318, 319.  
Armory Square Hospital, 200, 222.  
Arnauld-Plessy, Mme., 396.  
Arnold, Thomas, 73.  
Arnold, William D., his *Oakfield*, 390.  
Atkinson, Edward, 236.  
Atlantic cable, completion of, 126.  
*Atlantic Monthly*, H.'s paper, "Justice to the Corporations" in, 445, 446,

## INDEX

- and "A Hint to the Rich," 451 *f.*; 129, 184, 394 *n.*
- Auber, Daniel F. E., *Masaniello*, 54.
- Austin, Edward, H. quoted on, 84, 85; 81, 82, 83, 130, 188, 284. *Letter* of, to H., 85-87.
- Austin, Samuel, H. quoted on, 84; 81.
- Averell, Welford W., 176, 185, 188.
- BACH, JOHANN S., 392.
- Bache, Alexander D., 178.
- Bacon, Francis, Lord, 93.
- Bacon, Robert, 349, 363.
- Baghot, Walter, 390.
- Balch, Franklin G., 379, 380.
- Ball's Bluff, battle of, 153, 158.
- Baltimore, Mass. troops attacked in, 412; and the Symphony Orchestra, 487.
- Bancroft, Charles, 79.
- Bancroft, George, 105.
- Bancroft, John C., quoted, on Soldiers Field address, 337; 24, 91, 105, 119, 120, 127, 186, 271, 457. *Letter* of, to H., 299.
- Bankers, H. quoted on services of, in 1907, 440.
- Banks, Nathaniel P., 152, 162, 165, 166, 169, 175, 190.
- Barclay's Brewery, 93.
- Baring Bros. & Co., 269, 282, 286.
- Barlow, Francis C., death of his wife, 226, 227; 24, 90, 219, 223, 224, 225, 237, 239, 247. *Letter* of, to H., 221.
- Barnard, Mr., U.S. Minister to Germany, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 69.
- Barrie, Sir J. M., *The Little Minister*, 397.
- Barron, Charles W., *Letter* from H. to, 460.
- Bartlett, C. L., 154.
- Bartlett, Schuyler, 270 and *n.*
- Bartlett, William F., 237, 238.
- Beaufort Island, 158.
- Beauregard, Pierre G. T., 151.
- Beethoven, Ludwig von, *Fidelio*, 46, 69; Ninth Symphony, 58; *Eroica* Symphony, 392, 503; 47, 54, 58, 391, 495.
- Bell, Helen (Choate), *Letter* of, to H., 373.
- Bellini, Vincenzo, *I Puritani*, 29, 46; *Norma*, 46, 63; *The Montagues and Capulets*, 57.
- Benham, General, 278, 279.
- Berlin, opera in, 55, 56.
- Bernhardt, Sarah, 280.
- Bernstorff, Count, 467, 474, 475, 513, 520.
- Berry, General, 189.
- Bethune, George A., 25, 52.
- Beust, Herr von, 58, 60, 61, 62.
- Bible, the, advice on reading, 96.
- Bigelow, Henry J., 16, 122, 130.
- Bigelow, W. Sturgis, 403.
- Birney, David B., 189.
- Bishop, J. B., *Theodore Roosevelt and his Times*, 435 and *n.*
- Bismarck, Count Otto von, 477.
- "Black Friday," 274.
- Blagden, George, 158.
- Blaine, James G., 432.
- Blake, S. Parkman, marries Mary Lee Higginson, 274 and *n.*; 24.
- "Bloody Monday," 25.
- Bolton, C. K., *Portraits of the Founders*, 3 *n.*
- Boott, Francis, 98, 275.
- Boott, Miss, 275.
- Bosio, Angiolina, 30, 78.
- Boston, the Chauncy St.-Bedford Place neighborhood in the forties, 14-16; changes in, 16 and *n.*; the great fire of 1872, 17, 276 *f.*; in 1852-53, 72 *f.*; G. S. Curtis quoted on Copperheads in, 229, 230; large incomes in, 236; oil speculation in, 240; 1, 2, 8.
- Boston *Advertiser*, 149, 247.
- Boston Common, "game of war" on, 22, 23; 7, 17, 18.
- Boston *Globe*, *Letter* from H. to, 465.
- Boston *Herald*, H. advocates preparedness in letters to, 477, 478; 322 *n.*, 367, 404 *n.*, 425, 465.
- Boston Latin School, the chief factor in H.'s education, 21, 22; 6, 7, 23.
- Boston Music Hall, dedication of, 74, 75; first concerts of Symphony Orchestra in, 299, 300; 294, 297, 302, 312.
- Boston Symphony Orchestra. See Symphony Orchestra.
- Boston *Transcript*, H.'s obituary notices in, 521; 302, 311 *n.*, 320 *n.*
- Boswell, James, *Life of Johnson*, 96; 374.
- Boutwell, George S., 178.
- Bowditch, Henry I., 17, 327.
- Bowditch, Henry P., 158, 185, 186.
- Bowditch, "Nat," killed at Kelly's Ford, 181 and *n.*; 158.
- Bowditch, Vincent Y., *Letters* from and to H., 326.
- Bradford, Gamaliel, *Union Portraits*, 189 *n.*
- Brahms, Johannes, 300, 302, 392.
- Brandy Station, battle of, made the Federal cavalry, 193 and *n.*
- Brannan, General, 248.
- Brassey, Sir Thomas, 280, 285.
- Brennan, William H., 471.
- Brent, Bishop Charles H., 406. *Letter* from H. to, 394.

- Briggs, Le Baron R., 377. *Letters from H.* to, 367-369, 380, 381-384.  
Brimmer, Martin, 349 *n.*, 401.  
British Army, red tape in, 111.  
Britton, Captain, 27, 28.  
Brook Farm, Second Mass. Infantry mustered in at, 147 *ff.*  
Brooks, Phillips, his Commemoration Day prayer, 237, 238; 8, 21, 22, 24, 90, 394 and *n.*, 396, 406, 525.  
Brooks, Preston S., assault on Sumner, 126.  
Brown, John, at Ossawatomie, 89; his raid on Harper's Ferry, 133; H. quoted on, 133.  
Brown, William G., *The Foe of Compromise*, 237 *n.*  
Browne, Edward I., *Letter from H.* to, 32.  
Browning, Robert, *Men and Women*, 186; 243.  
Bruce, George A., *Twentieth Regiment Massachusetts Volunteers*, 154 *n.*  
Bryan, William J., 429, 432, 438.  
Bryce James (Viscount), 304, 406.  
Buchanan, James, 94.  
Buckeye Oil Co., H. enters employ of, 240; operations of, 240 *ff.*; failure of, 247.  
Buford, General, 175, 184, 185, 193, 214, 215.  
Bull Run, first battle of, 151, 152; second battle of, 167, 168.  
Burke, Edmund, 4.  
Burlington and Missouri R.R., 283, 284, 285.  
Burns, Anthony, fugitive slave, case of, 83, 87.  
Burnside, Ambrose E., 158, 167, 168, 171, 173, 176, 181, 225.  
Business Administration, Graduate School of, H. agrees to underwrite necessary funds for, 375-377.  
Butler, Benjamin F., 224.  
Butler, Frances Kemble. *See* Kemble, Frances A.  
  
CABOT, Arthur T., 349.  
Cabot, Frederick P., 383. *Letter from H.* to, 498.  
Cabot, George, 4.  
Cabot, Henry, letter of J. L. Motley to, 59-62.  
Cabot, J. Elliot, 69.  
Cabot, Louis, 158.  
Cabot, Dr., 201.  
Calumet and Hecla mines, 263, 264, 272, 273, 274, 283, 303, 304, 421, 448.  
Calvin, John, 41.  
Camp Andrew. *See* Brook Farm.  
Camperdown, Earl of. *See* Duncan, G. A. P.  
  
Candee De Forest, *Letter from H.* to, 271.  
Carlyle, Thomas, *Cromwell*, 253, 425, 454.  
Carnegie, Andrew, 239, 452, 453. *Letters of*, to H., 365, 366.  
Carnegie Institute, H. made a trustee of, 365, 366; his speech at dinner of (1911), 453; H. proposes to resign as trustee of, 506, 507.  
Carver, Thomas N., 447, 449, 450.  
Cary, Elizabeth Cabot, marries Louis Agassiz, 209. And *see* Agassiz, Elizabeth Cary.  
Cary, Richard, 21, 146, 165, 167 *n.*, 208.  
Cary, Mrs. Richard, 167.  
Cary, Thomas G., 98, 209.  
Cavalry, lack of, in U.S. Army in 1861, 156; slow evolution of, 156; in Union army *made* by battle of Brandy Station, 193 and *n.* And *see* Massachusetts Regiments.  
Cedar Mountain, battle of, 165, 166.  
Cesnola, Colonel, 195.  
Chadwick, George W., 461.  
Chalamet, M., 95.  
Chamberlain, Joseph, 304, 418.  
Chamberlain, S. E., 158, 161, 215, 218 and *n.*, 219, 220. *Letter of*, to H., 230.  
Chancellorsville, echoes of battle of, 188, 189, 190 and *n.*, 395.  
Channing, Edward T., 25.  
Channing, Francis A. (Baron Channing of Wellingborough), 94.  
Channing, Julia, letter of, to George Higginson, 13.  
Channing, W. Ellery, 395.  
Channing, William H., 93, 94, 191.  
Channing, Mrs. William H., 93, 94.  
Chase, Edward C., 274.  
Chase, Kate, 178.  
Chase, Salmon P., 175, 178.  
Chase and Higginson, 274.  
Chauncy Hall School, 15.  
Chicago, Burlington and Quincy R.R., 273, 274, 283, 412, 438.  
Child, Francis J., 25, 38.  
China, 525.  
Chinese War (1857), 110.  
Choate, Joseph H., 24, 73.  
Christmas at Cottonham, 262.  
Clapp, Channing, at Cottonham, 248, 249, 250, 251, 253, 254, 255, 265, 266; 24, 158, 200, 223. *Letter of*, to H., 220.  
Clapp, Clift R., 501.  
Clapp, Mrs., mother of Channing C., 262.  
Clay, Henry, death of, 76.  
Cleveland, Grover, 338 and *n.*, 341, 432.

## INDEX

- Clough, Arthur H., his *Bothie of Tober-na-Vuolich*, 93, 96, 390; little known in London, 94.  
 "Club, The," H.'s special predilection for, 402 and n.; meetings of, 403, 404; 400, 526.  
 Cochrane, Alexander, 448.  
 Coffin, Charles A., 287, 433, 451. *Letters from H. to*, 446, 502 n.  
*Congregationalist, The*, 151.  
 Congress of U.S., H.'s impatience with, 425, 433, 442, 479.  
 Conrad, Joseph, 411.  
 Cook, Lyman, 436.  
 Cooke, Jay, & Co., failure of, 283.  
 Coolidge, T. Jefferson, 437.  
 Copley-Plaza, H.'s 80th birthday celebrated by dinner at, 460, 461.  
 Copper market in 1901, H. Adams on, 417.  
 Coquelin, B. C., 396.  
 Corporations, H. quoted on, 439, 442, 443, 444, 445, 446.  
 Cotting, Charles U., 301.  
 Cotton, H.'s unsuccessful attempt at raising. *See* Cottonham plantation.  
 Cottonham plantation, H.'s experiment in cotton-raising at, 248-266.  
 Courtenay, Edward, Earl of Devonshire, 451.  
 Crafts, James M., 402, 406.  
 Cromwell, Oliver, 386.  
 Crothers, Samuel M., 393, 446.  
 Crowninshield, Benjamin W., his *History of the First Regiment of Mass. Cavalry*, 156 n., 193 and n.; 158.  
 Crowninshield, Caspar, 154, 158, 215.  
 Crystal Palace, the, 93.  
 Cuban teachers at Harvard, 428.  
 Culom, Shelby M., 437.  
 Cummings, Gordon, 94.  
 Curtis, Benjamin R., his dissenting opinion in Dred Scott case, 110.  
 Curtis, Greely S., captain in 1st Mass. Cavalry, 155; major of same, 158, 161; at Aldie Gap, 194, 195, 196; stricken by malaria, 203, 206; marries Harriet Appleton, 206 n.; 21, 146, 147, 153, 166, 172, 176, 177, 181 and n., 182, 183, 184, 185, 186, 191, 198, 216, and n., 217, 218, 258, 279, 336, 386, 404. *Letters of, to H.*, 203, 204, 220, 228, 229, 231, 234.  
 Curtis, H. Pelham, 158, 171, 220, 336.  
 Cushing, Harvey, *Letters from H. to*, 511.  
*Cycle of Adams Letters, A*, 177 n., 195 n.  
 Czillac, Madame, 137.  
  
**DALTON, CHARLES H.**, 236.  
 Dalton, Edward B., on Soldiers Field tablet, 333 n.; H.'s remarks on, 533; 24, 220, 222 and n., 223.  
 Dalton, Henry R., 521. *Letter of, to H.*, 221.  
 Dana, Richard H., his *Two Years Before the Mast*, 26, 502.  
 Dana, Mr., in Germany, 36, 37, 38, 40.  
 Davidson, Randall, Archbishop of Canterbury, 510.  
 Davis, William S., 79.  
 Davis, Colonel, 184, 185, 180.  
 Davis, Lieutenant, 195.  
 Davison, Mr., as Shylock, 55.  
 Death, private in 2d Mass. Infantry, 148.  
 Democratic Party, H. on, 443.  
 Dernburg, Bernhard, 475, 520.  
 Devens, Charles, 237, 336.  
 Dexter, F. Gordon, 18.  
 Dexter, George, 8, 24.  
 Dexter, William P., 69, 70, 71, 138.  
 Dexter, Mrs. W. P., 69, 70, 71.  
*Dial*, the, 297.  
 Dickens, Charles, 8.  
 Dilke, Sir Charles, W., 304.  
 Dixwell, Epes S., 21.  
 Donald, Malcolm, 356.  
 Donizetti, Gaetano, *Lucresia Borgia*, 69.  
 Donner, O. W., 310, 311.  
 Doubleday, Abner, 189.  
 Draper, Ruth, *Letter from H. to*, 455.  
 Draper, William F., 427.  
 Dresden, H.'s sojourn at (1852), 47-49, 52-55, 56; his trouble with police officials at, 58 ff.; opera in, 63, 64; 37, 38, 105, 120.  
 Dresel, Otto, *Letter from H. to*, 306-309; *letter to H.*, 309.  
 Du Maurier, George, 136.  
 Duck Creek. *See* Buckeye Oil Co.  
 Duffie, Colonel, 185, 193.  
 Duncan, George A. P., 403.  
 Duse, Eleonora, 341 and n., 397 ff.  
 Dwight, John S., his *Journal of Music*, 129, 137; quoted, 392; 78, 297 and n., 305.  
 Dwight, Wilder, killed at Antietam, 172; 24, 79, 146, 147, 185.  
  
**EARLY, JUBAL C.**, 222 and n.  
 Eliot, Charles W., the "icicle myth," 133 and n.; "The Agassiz House in Quincy St.," 210 n.; and others, letter to H. on his retirement from control of the Orchestra, 322-324; quoted on H. and Harvard, 328; his *University Administration* quoted, 346, 347; quoted, on H.'s services on Corporation, 347, 348; quoted, 411, 426; 21, 22, 24, 80, 237, 291 n., 327,

- 333, 335, 337, 349, 356, 357, 364, 375, 376, 382, 400, 422, 461, 479, 490. *Letters from H.* to, 442, 444, 454, 472, 474, 475, 480, 481, 482, 493, 518; *letters to H.*, 358, 377, 379, 473, 480, 483, 489, 493.
- Eliot, George, her *Scenes from Clerical Life*, 129; *Adam Bede*, 129.
- Eliot, Samuel, 80.
- Eliot, Rev. Mr., H.'s fellow traveler in Europe (1852), 26, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 40, 41, 42, 75, 104.
- Elizabeth, Queen of the Belgians, 526.
- Elliott, Howard, 526.
- Ellis, Charles A., manager of Symphony Orchestra, engages Muck as conductor, 309; 293, 307, 471, 501. *Letter from H.* to, 469; *letter to H.*, 301.
- Emancipation proclamations, "mere waste paper," 175.
- Emerson, Edward W., *Life and Letters of Charles Russell Lowell*, 77 n., 83 n., 103, 232, 233, 421 and n.; 459.
- Emerson, Ralph Waldo, and his doctrine of individualism, 91; his "Voluntaries," 206; lines of, quoted on Soldiers Field tablet, 331, 332 and n.; his "Compensation," 377; 4, 8, 23, 129, 237, 275, 373, 459.
- Emerson, William, 15.
- Endicott, John, 2.
- Endicott, William, 437, 521.
- Endicott, William C., 349 n.
- England, H. Adams on conditions in (1901), 418; and the World War, 464; H. wishes the U.S. to help, 464; H.'s sympathy with, 466, 467, 472, 475; and the U.S., relations between, reviewed by Gilbert Murray, 508, 509.
- "English Men of Letters" series, 390.
- English opinion on American politics (1856), 194.
- "Epizootic," the, and the Boston fire of 1872, 277.
- Epstein, Julius, 127, 132, 135, 180, 181, 281, 297, 301, 303, 310, 520.
- Essex Junto, 4.
- Eugénie, Empress, 95.
- Eustis, Rev. Mr., 21.
- Everett, Edward, 25, 87.
- FAIRCHILD, CHARLES**, 288.
- Farragut, David, in Mobile Bay, 231.
- Farrer, Minna, *Letters from H.* to, 512, 515, 525.
- Farrer, Sir William, 455.
- Farrington, Major, 188.
- Favart, Madame, 280.
- Fay, Mr., Secretary of U.S. Legation at Berlin, 56, 58, 59, 60, 61, 63, 69.
- Federal Reserve Act, 478, 479.
- Felton, Cornelius C., 25.
- Felton, Mary, 192, 200.
- Ferir, Emil, 295, 317.
- Ferney, Switzerland, 41.
- Fiedler, Max, sixth conductor of the Symphony Orchestra, 293, 305 n., 321.
- Field, John W., 99, 104, 222.
- Fielding, Henry, 91.
- Fillebrown, George M., 186, 194, 195, 197, 198 and n.
- Fillmore, Millard, 76.
- First Church (Boston), 15.
- Fisk, James, Jr., 274.
- Fish and Hatch, 283.
- Fiske, John, 402 and n., 403.
- Fiske, Minnie M., as Tess, 397.
- Flint, "Duchy," 214.
- Florence, 97, 98.
- Flotow, Friedrich von, *Martha*, 44, 64.
- Foch, Ferdinand, 508.
- Follen, Charles, 36, 37, 40, 47.
- Follen, Mrs., 36.
- Forbes, Mrs. Edith (Emerson), 432.
- Forbes, John M., the railroad-builder, 273, 283; 10, 163, 275, 276, 429, 431, 432, 433, 437.
- Forbes, Ralph E., 430.
- Forbes, Robert B., 273.
- Forbes, W. Cameron, 433. *Letters from H.* to, 429, 430.
- Forbes, William H., 158, 215, 287, 429, 431.
- Forbes, Mr., British Minister to Germany, 58, 59, 60, 61, 64.
- Forbes-Robertson, Sir Johnston, 397.
- Formes, Karl J., 30, 55, 56, 69.
- Fox, Mrs. Jabez, 178 n.
- France, and Prussia, H. prophesies concerning, 281.
- Franck, César, 392.
- Free-silver agitation of 1893, 338 and n.
- Free trade, H. a believer in, 433.
- Frémont, John C., 94.
- Friday Club. *See* "Club, The."
- Fugitive Slave Act, 83.
- Fuller, Agnes, *Letter from H.* to, 22.
- Fuller, Dr. Samuel, 2.
- "Fulmens, the," 208.
- Furness, Horace H., H. quoted on, 457. *Letters of* to H., 457, 458.
- GARDNER, FRANCIS**, 21.
- Gardner, George P., 521.
- Gardner, John L., 284, 437, 458.
- Garrison, William L., 395.
- Gaston, William, Mayor of Boston in 1872, 277, 278, 279.
- Gay, Edwin F., 376.
- General Education Board, 375.

## INDEX

- General Electric Co., 287, 339, 446.  
 Geneva, 41.  
 George III, 508.  
 George Higginson Professorship, 326 n.  
 Gericke, Wilhelm, second conductor of Symphony Orchestra, 293, 296, 303, 304, 305 and n., 306, 307, 308, 309, 311; his second engagement, 293, 311 f.; he "made" the Orchestra, 305, 519; brings many new players from Europe, 305; H.'s speech at farewell dinner to, 305, 306; invited to return in, 310; 320. *Letters* from H. to, 318, 519.  
 German students, habits of, 66.  
 Germans, virtues and vices of, 68; H. Adams on characteristics of, 417; in Symphony Orchestra, 469, 472, 473, 480, 481, 484, 495, 497, 519; C. W. Eliot quoted on the things they did not invent, 473.  
 Germania Orchestra, 297, 323.  
 Germany, H. foresees revolution in, 514, 515.  
 Gettysburg, battle of, 203, 204, 395.  
 Gibbs, Alfred S., 36.  
 Gilder, Mrs. R. W., 399.  
 Gildersleeve, Basil L., 69. *Letter* of, to H., 456.  
 Gladstone, W. E., 304, 349.  
 Gleason, Colonel, 187, 188.  
 Glück, C. W., *Iphigenia in Aulis*, '55; *Iphigenia in Tauris*, 69.  
 Goethe, Johann W. von, *Faust*, 391; 390.  
 Goldsmith, Oliver, 407.  
 Goodwin, Richard C., 146, 165.  
 Gordon, Charles G. ("Chinese"), 304.  
 Gordon, George A., absolves H. for non-attendance at church, 394; 367, 406. *Letter* from H. to, 394.  
 Gordon, George H., his *Brook Farm to Cedar Mountain*, quoted, 144, 152; Colonel of 2d Mass. Infantry, 145, 146, 149, 155, 165.  
 Got, François J. E., 280, 396.  
 Göttingen, 37.  
 Gould, Benjamin A., 38.  
 Gould, Jay, 274.  
 Gracie, Margaret, marries J. J. Higginson, 274 and n.  
 Grant, Ulysses S., 203, 222, 224, 228, 229.  
 Gray, Asa, 25.  
 Gray, John C., 335, 402, 521.  
 Greeley, Horace, 228.  
 Gregg, John I., 184, 185, 193, 215.  
 Grenadier Guards, 510.  
 Grenfell, Wilfred T., 453.  
 Grisez, G., 295.  
 Grisi, Giulia, 29, 94, 137.  
 Guild, Curtis, 432.
- Guinness, Richard S., *Letter* from H. to, 465, 466.  
 Gurney, Ellen (Hooper), H.'s sketch of, 372, 374.
- HADLEY, ARTHUR T., quoted, 354, 364.  
 Hague, The, Conferences at, 465 n.  
 Haldane, Richard B. (Lord), 509.  
 Haldeman, Mr., 31, 34, 41.  
 Hale, George S., 26.  
 Hale, Philip, quoted, on Muck, 321, 322; 519.  
 Halévy, Jacques, *Die Juden*, 69.  
 Halleck, Henry W., 163, 164, 165, 175, 176, 181, 204.  
 Hallowell, Norwood P., 172.  
 Hamilton, Alexander, 425, 477.  
 Hamlin, Hannibal, 139.  
 Hampton, Wade, 176.  
 Hancock, John, 4.  
 Hancock, Winfield S., 226.  
 Handel, George Frederick, *Josua*, 56; *Largo*, 527.  
 Hardy, Alpheus, 132.  
 Hardy, Thomas, *Tess*, 397.  
 Harvard, John, 356.  
*Harvard Alumni Bulletin*, 210 n., 330 n., 348 n.  
 Harvard Battalion in Spanish War, 426.  
 Harvard Club of Boston, 460.  
 Harvard College (University), H.'s brief sojourn at, 24-26; Class-day of 1852, 73, 74; graduation of Class of '55, 89, 90; Commemoration Day at (1865), 238; H.'s loyalty to, 327; H.'s only degree from, 328; H. solicits funds for, 328, 329; his popularity at, 337, 338, 381; Santayana quoted on undergraduates of, 350, 351; H. quoted on the proper task of, 353 f.; Roosevelt as possible president of, 359 f.; gift of Princeton Fellowship to, 364; H.'s Memorial Day speeches at, 370, 371; H. and the Freshman dormitories, 374; his addresses at meetings of Freshmen, 381 f.; his last speech at, 384, 526; students of, in Spanish War, 426; Cuban teachers at, 428. And see Business Administration (Graduate School of), Harvard Union, Jefferson Physical Laboratory, "Med. Fac." episode, Soldiers Field.  
 Harvard Corporation, H. chosen a member of, 338, 339, 343 f., 346; Presidents Eliot and Lowell on H.'s service on, 347, 348; duties and functions of, 348, 349.  
 Harvard Endowment Fund, 525.  
*Harvard Graduates' Magazine*, 201 n., 271 n.

- Harvard Medical School, H.'s deep interest in, 374.
- Harvard Memorial Biographies*, 166 n.
- Harvard Musical Association, 297, 299, 323.
- Harvard Union, presented to the University by H., 350, 351 *f.*; his address at "ratification meeting," 353-356; and at dedication, 356, 357; present status of, 358, 359 and n.; H.'s speech at, in April, 1914, 381; 3, 347.
- Harvard-Yale boat-race, 75, 76.
- Hathaway, Anne, 13.
- Hauteville, Baron d', 97.
- Hawthorne, N., his *Blithedale Romance*, 148.
- Hay, John, 411.
- Hay, Mrs. John, 421.
- Haydn, Johann M., 57, 58.
- Hayes, Rutherford B., 336.
- Hecla mine. *See* Calumet and Hecla.
- Heidelberg University, 36, 37, 38.
- Henderson, W. J., quoted, 310 n.
- Henschel, George, first conductor of Symphony Orchestra, 293, 296, 297, 298, 304, 305 n.; his first season "an amazing success," 299; retires after third season, 300, 301; his letters to H., 301, 302; selects musical library for Orchestra, 302 and n.
- Hess, Willy, 318, 319.
- Higginson, A. Henry, H.'s son, quoted, 196 n.; birth of, 286; quoted on H. as a lover of horses, 386-388; 338, 349, 393, 516, 525, 526, 527.
- Higginson, Cécile, H.'s daughter, birth of, 275; death of, 286; 339.
- Higginson, Rev. Francis, settles in Salem (1620), 2; supposed portrait of, 3 and n.; death of, 3, 4; his descendants, 4 *f.*; 23, 425.
- Higginson, Dr. Francis, 26.
- Higginson, Francis L., H.'s brother, anxious to enlist, 173; in 54th Mass. Infantry (colored), 192, 193; a partner in Lee, Higginson & Co., 271 and n.; retires from firm, 288; 12 n., 18, 21, 116, 117, 130, 131, 133, 136, 143, 191, 206, 222, 234, 236, 263, 276, 284, 285, 516.
- Higginson, George (I), H.'s grandfather, 5, 14.
- Higginson, Mrs. George, H.'s grandmother, 14.
- Higginson, George (II), H.'s father, marries Mary Cabot Lee, 5; H.'s reminiscences of, 6; his influence dominant in H.'s early life, 8; sketch of, 8 *f.*; Henry Lee quoted on, 10-12; his children, 12 n.; letter of Mrs. Channing to, 13; his various resi-
- dences, 14, 16; urges H.'s return from Europe, 68, 69, 134, 135; as presidential candidates in 1860, 139; advises abandonment of Cottonham experiment, 265; founder of Lee and Higginson, 268, 269, 270; retires from firm, 274, 284; death of, 326; W. James, C. F. Adams, H. C. Lodge, V. Y. Bowditch quoted on, 326; 17, 23, 27, 60, 71 n., 74, 79, 80, 81, 87, 88, 91, 93, 110, 116, 117, 118, 125, 129, 132, 136, 141, 143, 146, 149, 152, 155, 161, 174, 180, 182, 183, 188, 200, 201, 203, 204, 241, 247, 263, 264, 272, 277, 279, 304, 339, 341, 410, 455, 521. *Letters from H. to, 1, 9, 10, 12, 33, 36, 41, 43, 51, 52, 53, 64, 67, 68, 70, 84, 85, 96, 97, 98, 99, 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 110, 111, 113, 114, 119, 121-124, 125, 128, 129, 130, 131, 133, 135, 150, 153, 158, 159, 163, 166, 167, 172, 190, 191, 223, 224, 225, 226, 241, 251, 252, 257, 258, 259, 260, 261, 262, 263, 264, 265, 281, 303, 425; letters to H., 50, 51, 67, 68, 69, 73, 74, 80 n., 112, 113, 114, 115, 125, 127, 128, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133, 139.*
- Higginson, George (III), H.'s brother, 12 n., 17, 18, 20, 23, 51, 52, 79, 110, 117, 130, 143, 182, 183. *Letters from H. to, 43.*
- Higginson, George (IV), H.'s nephew, 516.
- Higginson, Sir George W., 455. *Letter of, to H., 510.*
- HIGGINSON, HENRY LEE**  
Birth and early schooling, 5-8, 21; at the Latin School 6, 7, 21, 22, 23; on his father, 6, and his mother, 6, 7, 12; his brief sojourn at Harvard, 8, 23, 24-26; his father's influence dominant in his early life, 8 *f.*; tone of his early letters to his father, 9, 10; other early letters, 17-20; his prowess in the "war-game" on the Common, 22, 23; eye-trouble compels him to leave College, 25, 26.  
His first visit to Europe, 28 *f.*; his European diary, quoted, 28, 31, 32, 33, 41, 45, 46, 47, 54-59, 63, 64, 69, 71; 28; the opera in London, 29, 30; adventures on Strahleck Pass, 33-36; his plans for study in Europe, 36-40, 43, 44; inclines to fix himself at Dresden, 37, 38; traveling in Switzerland, with a companion, 41, 42; the opera in Munich, 44, 45, 46; advises brother George on education, 45; music at Leipzig, 47; in Prof. Wigard's household at Dresden, 47 *f.*; his father's letters, of advice, etc., 50; letters on

letter-writing, and on his life in Dresden, 51 *f.*; thinks of studying music, 52, 55; state of his eyes, 52, 53, 65; opera concerts, etc., in Dresden, 54, 58, 63, 64; a week in Vienna, 58; his affair with the Dresden police, because of Wigard, 58, 59-63; in Berlin, 64; correspondence with his father concerning his plans for a long stay in Germany, 64 *f.*; always thinking of music, 66, 67; on immorality, etc., in Germany and in U.S., 68; urged by his father to return, 68, 69; opera in Berlin, 69; in Rügen, 69 *f.*; returns to America, 71.

Abandons idea of returning to Harvard, 80; studies with Samuel Eliot, 80; his avocations, 81, 82; in the employ of the Austins, 81, 82, 83; his friends, and their discussions of pending problems, 82; his views on slavery and Abolition, 83; the case of Anthony Burns, 83, 87; shares in graduation exercises of Class of '55, 83, 89, 90; quoted, on the Austin brothers, 84, 85; a type-specimen of the slowly developing Anglo-Saxon, 90; his physical and mental equipment in 1856, 90, 91; influence of Emerson on, 91; a Puritan in his personal habits, 91; his passion for friendship, 91, 92; sails for Europe with Mason and Perkins, 92.

*Four Years in Europe.* — His diary quoted, 93, 94, 95, 98; in London, 93, 94; in Paris, 94 *f.*; advises his sister on reading, 96; in Florence, 97, 98; still bent on music, 98, 105, 107-109; in Rome, 98 *f.*; quoted on W. W. Story, 99; the Campagna, 100, 101; traveling north, 101, 102; in Venice, 102; on the Tyrolese Alps, 103; in Dresden, 105; in Vienna, 106 *f.*; decides to settle there, to study music, 106 *f.*; advantages of Vienna in that regard, 106, 109; limit of his musical aims, 109; trading in indigo, etc., 110; his interest in politics, 110; on British army "red tape," 111; his philosophy, 111, 112; correspondence with his father on effects of panic of 1857, 112 *f.*; on family finances, 116-119; the Christmas letter from Berlin, 119; his musical studies interrupted by injury to his arm, 120 *f.*; social life in Vienna, 124; forced economies, 124, 128; his Jewish friends, 125; and C. Sumner, 126; on the Atlantic cable, 126; the Italian War of 1859, 127, 128; his language criticized by his father, 128, 129; his reading, 129;

abortive business schemes, 129; urged to return home, but is disinclined to do so, 130, 131; quoted on John Brown's raid on Harper's Ferry, 133; his father again urges his return, 134, 135; his inability to play makes him abandon musical studies, 135; on W. H. Seward, 136; follows political affairs in U.S. (1860), 136; music and drama in Paris, 137; sails for home, 139.

*The Civil War.* — Seeking employment, 140, 141; effect of firing on Fort Sumter, 141 *f.*; his "reaction" manifested in letter to J. J. H., 142, 143; helps to raise 2d Mass. Infantry, 145 *f.*; at Camp Andrew, 147 *f.*; drilling Germans, 149; off for the front, 150; as first lieutenant of Co. D., sees little active service, 150 *f.*; experiences as officer of the guard, 153; describes aftermath of Ball's Bluff, 154; commissioned captain in 1st Mass. Cavalry, 155; invalided home, 155, 156; at Hilton Head, S.C., 158 *f.*; promoted to major, 159; his life in S.C. described in letter to his sister, 159-161; his love for horses, 161; and a rebel prisoner, 162; longs to be ordered North, 163; urges J. J. H. to return from Europe, 163, 164; going North, 166; with the regiment in the autumn of 1862, echoes of South Mountain and Antietam, 168-173; pessimistic at the close of 1862, 175; the first months of 1863, 176 *f.*; at home on furlough, 177 and *n.*; society in Washington, 178; returns to regiment, 178; optimistic letter to A. W. Thayer, 179-181; quoted on Hooker, 182; his one glimpse of Lincoln, 182; marching, but not fighting, 182-180; echoes of Chancellorsville, 188, 189, 190; as a prophet, 191, 192; severely wounded in the battle of Aldie Gap, 194-201, 196 *n.*, invalided home, 201; his late visit to the battlefield, 201 *n.*; correspondence during convalescence, 202-209; becomes engaged to Ida Agassiz, 209 *f.*; married, Dec. 5, 1863, 213; hears of trouble in the regiment, 215 *f.*; wanted by H. S. Russell as lieutenant-colonel of 5th Mass. Cavalry, 219, 220; on Gen. Barlow's staff, 221; starts south, 222; doubts as to his health, 223; in camp near Petersburg, views on men and things, 223-227; on Shakespeare's *Henry VI*, 226; no peace until slavery is abandoned, 226; disheartening delays, 227; goes north with Barlow, 227; finds himself unfit

for service and resigns from the army, 227; and the death of C. R. Lowell, 231, 232; his wish to take the field again discouraged by Curtis, J. J. H., and Adams, 234-236; looking for work, 236; on large incomes in Boston, 236 and *n.*; at Commemoration Day at Harvard, 237, 238.

*Two Wrong Guesses.* — Sources of the impression made by him upon his generation, 239, 240; employed by Buckeye Oil Co., to develop resources of Duck Creek district, Ohio, 240; his ignorance of his duties, 240; his experience described, 240-247; weak in accounts, 241; is sure that slavery is ended, 242; his reading, 243, 244, 253; dissatisfaction of the trustees of the Co., 244 *f.*; the experiment abandoned, 247; tries cotton-raising in Georgia, 248-266; with Morse and Clapp purchases Cottonham plantation, 248, 249, 251; counting unhatched chickens, 252; on the labor situation, 252, 253, 254, 255, 257, 260, 261; on the Southern attitude toward Reconstruction, 253; doubts as to the cotton crop, 260, 261, 262; contemplates going home for good, 263; the beginnings of Calumet and Hecla, 263, 264; the experiment abandoned, 265, 266; profit and loss, 266.

*Lee, Higginson & Co.* — Becomes a partner in the firm, 267; his attachment to the office, 267 and *n.*; his notes on the history of the firm, 268, 269, 271; his different residences, 274, 275; his business journeys, 275, 276; describes the great fire in Boston (1872), 276; his testimony before the investigating Commission, 278, 279; in Europe as Member of Commission to visit Vienna Exposition, 279 *f.*; prophesies concerning France and Prussia, 281; his mother's birthday always remembered, 282; the panic of 1873, 282, and after, 283-285; in Europe, in 1878, 285; his private joys and griefs, 286; quoted on the ups and downs of business, 286, 287; his partnership in the firm made his philanthropies possible, 288; relations with his partners, 289; talks to bond salesmen, 289, 290.

*The Symphony Orchestra.* — The first conception of the idea, 291, 296, 297; his purposes set forth in his address to the Orchestra in 1914, 291-296; proposes to endow it at his death, 294 and *n.*; relations with the members, 295, 315, 316; his other burdens

and responsibilities, 296; his "swift audacity," 297; engagement of Henschel a risk, 298; his plan announced in the press, 298; his correspondence with Henschel, 302, 303; worried about finances, 303, 304; speech at farewell dinner to Gericke, 305, 306; seeking a successor to Gericke, 306-310; his struggle with the Musicians' Union, 310, 312; the years of Gericke's second engagement, 311; assumes deficit of Symphony Hall budget, 312; correspondence with Gericke, 313, 314; asked to sit for a bust to be placed in Symphony Hall, 316, 317; gratitude of music-lovers, 317, 318; and Gericke's resignation, 318; engages Karl Muck, 319, 320; text of testimonial presented by Pres. Eliot and others on his 84th birthday, 322-324; why he failed to endow the Orchestra, 462, 463; his outlay on the Orchestra, 463, 499; the Muck imbroglio during the war, 469 *f.*; describes difficulties of the situation in letter to Ellis, 469, 470; addresses the Orchestra, 470-472; his appeal for harmony, and his personal feeling, 472 *f.*, 476; trouble comes with our entrance into the war, 480 *f.* (and see Muck, K., and Symphony Orchestra); his farewell to the Orchestra, 503-505; reviews work of Orchestra in letter to Gericke, 519, 520.

*The Friend of the College.* — Memories of his father, 326, 327; his long-standing loyalty to Harvard, 327; his first and only degree, 328; solicits funds for the College, 328, 329, 330; the gift of Soldiers Field, 330-337 (and see under Soldiers Field); letters relating to the Sever Hall address, 333-337; his popularity with the students, 337, 338; first speech at a Commencement dinner, 338; chosen a member of the Corporation, 338, 343 *f.*; the panic of 1893, 338 *f.*; advice from Henry Lee, 340-342; how he performed his duties as a Fellow, 346 *f.*; the gift of the Harvard Union, 350, 351 *f.*; his addresses on the purpose of the gift, 353-356, and at the dedication, 356, 357; his portrait, by Sargent, 358 and *n.*, 359; quoted on Roosevelt, 360, 361; his interest in, and benefactions to other institutions, 362 *f.*; "the ideal Harvard Man," 364; trustee of Carnegie Institute, 365, 366; on the "Med. Fac." episode, 367-369; Memorial Day speeches at Harvard, 370-371; address on R. G.

Shaw, 371; his sketches of women friends, 371-374; his sentimental side but one phase of a complex personality, 374; his benefactions to the University and its servants, 374 *f.*; over-work the inevitable result of his manifold activities, 377, 378; does not practise what he preaches, 378-381; if he paid a great price, great was the reward, 381; his speech at the Union in April, 1914, 381; his addresses at Freshmen meetings, 381-384; his last address, 384.

*Comrade and Citizen.* — His physique, 386; his love of horses and racing, 386 *f.*; an expert axeman, 388; finally surrenders to motor-cars, 389; his mode of dress, 389; his abstemious habits, 389; has few holidays, 389; his home life, 390; never a "collector," 390; his taste in reading, 390, 391; music always a passion with him, 391, 392; on the Eroica Symphony, 392; his nature deeply and sincerely religious, 393, 394; urges Phillips Brooks to remain at Trinity, 394 *n.*; letter to Bishop Brent on "practical idealism," 394-396; a life-long theatre-goer, and friend of many actors, 396, 397; his interest in Madame Duse, 397 *f.*; a member of many clubs, 400 *f.*; his fidelity to old army comradeships, 404-406; his enormous correspondence, 406, 407, 424; his memory for anniversaries, 407, his notes to women, 407, 408; his theory of letter-writing, 408; his art of personal expression and its result, illustrated, 408-411; his correspondence with C. King, 411, 412, and with C. E. Perkins, 412; offers to make good C. E. P.'s loss on an investment, 412; relations with W. James, 413-417; correspondence with H. Adams, 417-423.

*The Public Servant.* — By taste and habit a private citizen, 424; had slight interest in party politics, 424; distrusts politics and politicians, and Congress, 425, 433, 442, 445; his combination of Hamiltonianism and Jeffersonianism, 425; would have the Federal Government keep its hands off the private citizen, 425; in the Spanish-American War, 426 *f.*; raises funds for equipment of Harvard Battalion, 426; raises funds for model school at Santiago, 428; interested in bringing Cuban teachers to Harvard, 428; on retention of Philippines, 428, 429; urges Cameron Forbes to remain in Philippines, 430-432; a Republican

with frequent lapses, 432; his votes for president in 1884-1896, etc.; an independent in Mass., 432, 433; tries to keep an open mind, 433; is impatient of Federal interference with far-seeing corporations, etc., and with interlocking directorates, 433, 439, 442, 443, 444, 445, 446; correspondence on the railroad situation (1907), 435 *f.*; on presidential candidates in 1912, 438 *f.*; on the "wickedness" of rich men, 440, 441, 446; votes for Wilson in 1912, 442; his correspondence with Wilson, 442, 443, 444, 445; his opinion of Wilson, 443, 445; approaches politics from the angle of economics, 445 *f.*; letter to Taussig on proper method of dealing with business, 447-450; on the obligations of rich men to the community, 451, 453; his article in the *Atlantic*, "A Hint to the Rich," and the replies thereto, 451, 452; number and variety of his appearances before the public, 453, 454; a Boston "institution," 454; his popularity in Boston, 454; never content, 454, 455; relations with friends, old and new, 455 *f.*; his summer homes, 455; keeps faith with the dead, 459, 460; at his 80th-birthday dinner, 460, 461.

*The World War.* — Looks ruin in the face, 462; his affairs gradually straightened out, 462, 463, 478; his attitude toward the war in Europe, expressed in letters and newspaper articles, 463 *f.*; approves Pres. Wilson's proclamation of neutrality, 465 and *n.*, 466; his personal feeling, 465-468, 480; urges Col. House to induce the President to move for peace, 468; is greatly worried during 1915 by divers matters, 472, 473; his financial difficulties kept secret, 473; his views as to the war, and our proper policy, 474, 475; on Wilson's need of advice, 474; advises "preparedness," 476 *f.*; chairman of Committee on Preparedness parade, 478; continued correspondence with Wilson, 478; approves of Panama Tolls Repeal and Federal Reserve Act, 478; critical of Interstate Commerce Commission and of government control of public-service corporations, 479; his opinion of Wilson, 479; his loyalty brought in question by his attitude in the "Star-Spangled Banner" matter, and his loyalty to Muck, 485 *f.*; his attitude under abuse and misrepresentation, 488, 489; seeks counsel from friends, 489, 490, 493; his loyalty to Muck un-

- shaken, 491 *ff.*; letters to C. W. Eliot, reviewing the whole subject, 495-497; describes troubles in New York, 498; determines to retire from connection with the Orchestra in favor of a committee, 498, 499; describes arrest of Muck, 501; carries out his plan of retirement, 502 *ff.*
- The Last Months.* — His multifarious activities continued, 505 *ff.*; writes his Reminiscences, 507; his chief occupation following the events of the war, 508; his views as expressed in his letters to Dr. Cushing and others, 511 *ff.*; on the responsibility for the war, 512; hopes for a kindlier feeling between U.S. and other nations as a result of the war, 513, 514; "I told you so," 515; on the prospect of peace, 517, 518; his note in acknowledgment of testimonial on his 84th birthday, 518; advice to a young partner in the firm, 520, 521; his obituary notices in the *Transcript*, 521; on Lodge's address on C. F. Adams, 522; on the death of Henry Adams, 523, and of Henry James, 522, 523; always averse to indulgence in grief, 524; hopes the Versailles Treaty will be ratified by U.S., 525, 526, and that the U.S. will join League of Nations, 526; addresses Harvard students for the last time, 526; his last brief illness and death (Nov. 14, 1919), 526, 527; buried from Appleton Chapel, 527. His Reminiscences quoted, 5-8, 29, 31, 47-49, 81-83, 89, 155, 168-172, 182, 196-201, 248, 249, 260, 276-278, 284, 285, 486-488, 497, 498, 501, 502. His War Diary quoted, 182-189.
- Higginson, Ida Agassiz, quoted, 80, 81, 177 *n.*; describes visit with H. to Aldie battlefield, 201 *n.*; at Duck Creek, 244 *ff.*; her diary quoted, 244, 246, 255, 256, 257, 258, 265; at Cottonham, 255 *ff.*; teaching negro children, 259; wished to remain, 265; quoted, on H.'s reading, 390, 391, and on his passion for music, 391, 392; letter of Henry Lee to, 334; 215, 219, 222, 227, 266, 274, 275, 280, 324, 333, 341 *n.*, 343 *n.*, 400, 458, 527. Letters from H., 242, 243, 252, 253, 261, 276, 279, 280, 281, 304, 319, 327, 335, 337, 343, 351, 352, 370, 371, 428, 459.
- Higginson, James J., H.'s brother, zealous for free Kansas, 87; commissioned in 1st Mass. Cavalry, 174; captured at Aldie Gap, 195, 196; marries Margaret Gracie, 274 and *n.*; death of, 455; 12 and *n.*, 13, 21, 60, 93, 96, 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 127, 130, 134, 135, 136, 179, 180, 182, 183, 185, 188, 191, 192, 193, 194, 208, 222, 223, 227, 263, 264, 427. Letters from H. to, 17-19, 140, 141, 142, 163, 236; letters to H., 75-79, 88, 89, 173, 206-208, 210, 211, 234.
- Higginson, Rev. John, father of Francis, 2.
- Higginson, John, son of Francis, 3, 4.
- Higginson, Colonel John, 4.
- Higginson, Captain John, 4.
- Higginson, Mary Cabot (Lee), H.'s mother, 1; H.'s reminiscences of, 6; her death, 7, 11, 12; sketch of, 12 *ff.*; her birthday remembered by H., 282; 19, 73, 268, 339, 340, 385. Letter from H. to, 20.
- Higginson, Mary Lee, H.'s sister, marries S. Parkman Blake, 274 and *n.*; 12 *n.*, 24, 51, 74, 130, 131, 186, 188. Letters from H. to, 96, 100, 109, 116, 125, 159, 177, 178, 191; letters to H., 79, 80.
- Higginson, Stephen (I), 4.
- Higginson, Stephen (II), 4.
- Higginson, Stephen (III), 4, 6, 11.
- Higginson, Stephen (IV), student at Harvard, enlists in Spanish War, 426.
- Higginson, Thomas W., his *Descendants of Rev. Francis Higginson*, 3 *n.*; *Life of Francis Higginson*, 3 *n.*; *Cheerful Yesterdays*, 5, 87; 4, 5, 19, 23, 279, 395, 407.
- Higginson, Waldo, 23.
- Higginson & Co. (London), 289, 465.
- Higginson clan, alliances of, 14.
- Higginson stock, the, 5.
- Hill, Adams S., 24.
- Hill, James J., 436.
- Hilton Head, S.C., 158.
- Hoar, E. Rockwood, 485 *n.*
- Hoar, Samuel, 349, 401.
- Hollis, Ira N., 356.
- Holmes, Oliver Wendell, 20, 23, 25, 155, 237.
- Holmes, Oliver Wendell, Jr., 154, 155, 172, 402 *n.*, 403, 461. Letter from H. to, 524, 525.
- Homans, John, 402 *n.*
- Hoover, Joseph, H. quoted on, 182; at Chancellorsville, 189, 190; 171, 172, 181, 187, 196 *n.*
- Hooper, Annie, 178.
- Hooper, Edward W., 329, 343, 344, 349. Letter from H. to, 362; letter to H., 336.
- Hooper, Nelly, 178. And see Gurney, Ellen (Hooper).

## INDEX

- Hooper, Dr., 177 *n.*, 178.  
 Hooper, Mrs., 178.  
 Hosmer, James K., 237.  
 House, Edward M., *Letters from H. to*, 466, 468.  
 Hovey, C. F., & Co., 277.  
 Howard, A. A., 189, 190.  
 Howe, Mrs. George D., 297. *Letter from H. to*, 392.  
 Howe, Julia Ward, "Battle Hymn of the Republic," 494, 496, 518; 237.  
 Howe, M. A. De Wolfe, his *Boston Symphony Orchestra*, 296 and *n.*, 297 and *n.*, 298, 299, 305; his *A Great Private Citizen*, 394 *n.*  
 Howells, William D., 402, 411.  
 Hughes, Charles E., 432, 479.  
 Hugo, Victor, 456.  
 Hunt, Levett, 55.  
 Hunter, David, 158.  
 Hurlbut, Byron S., and the "Med. Fac." episode, 367 *f.*  
 Hyde, James H., 356.
- INDIAN MUTINY, III.**  
 Interlocking directorates. *See Corporations.*  
 Interstate Commerce Act, 437.  
 Interstate Commerce Commission, H. always critical of, 479.  
 Irving, Washington, 133.  
 Italian War of 1859, 127, 128.  
 Italy, traveling in, 101, 102.
- JACKSON, CHARLES, 14, 15.**  
 Jackson, James, 288, 340.  
 Jackson, Patrick T., 188.  
 Jackson, Thomas J. ("Stonewall"), 165, 189, 190.  
 Jackson, Mr., U.S. Minister to Austria, 126.  
 James, Mrs. Alice G., 399.  
 James, G. Wilkinson, 192, 193.  
 James, Henry, letter to W. James, 338 *n.*; death of, 523, 524; 243, 280, 304, 402. *Letters to H.*, 397, 398.  
 James, Henry, 2d, *Letter from H. to*, 523.  
 James, William, his relations with H., 414; death of, 455; 192, 243, 338 *n.*, 385, 399, 402 and *n.*, 403, 404, 424. *Letters from H. to*, 360, 413; *letters to H.*, 326, 333, 334, 353, 373, 403, 413, 414, 415-417, 428, 429.  
 James Island, fight at, 161.  
 Japan, 525, 526.  
 Jefferson, Thomas, 4, 425.  
 Jefferson Physical Laboratory, H. makes up deficit in budget of, 375.  
 Jewett, Sarah O., 14.  
 Jews, in Vienna, 125.
- Joan of Arc, 226.  
 Johnson, Samuel, "puffed up and stupid," 96; 374, 400.  
 Johnston, Joseph E., 151.  
 Julienne, Madame, 29, 30.
- KANEKO, BARON KENTARO, 406.**  
 Kansas, settlement of, 82; emigration of Free Soil men to, 87, 88, 89; 110.  
 Kean, J. R., 407.  
 Kelly's Ford, fight at, 181, 182.  
 Kemble, Frances A., her *Journal of a Residence on a Georgia Plantation*, 250; 297.  
 Kendal, Margaret (Robertson), 397.  
 Kendal, William H., 397.  
 Kilpatrick, H. J., 193, 194, 195, 203.  
 King, Clarence, his correspondence with H., 411, 412; 304.  
 King's Chapel, 91.  
 Kipling, Rudyard, 165.  
 Kitchener, Lord, 509.  
 Knickerbocker Club, N.Y., 426.  
 Kneisel, Franz, 315, 318.
- LA FARGE, JOHN, 340, 411, 415.**  
 "Laco" letters, 4.  
 Lamb, Charles, *Essays*, 96.  
 Lane, Gardiner M., 288, 521.  
 Lane, Mrs. Gardiner M., 456.  
 Lane, George M., 25, 38.  
 Lane, William C., *Letter from H. to*, 524.  
 Laumer, Ulrich, guide, 31, 33, 34, 35.  
 Lausanne, 97.  
 Lawrence, Abbott, 76, 78.  
 Lawrence, William, 349 *n.*, 367, 382, 461. *Letter from H. to*, 379.  
 League of Nations, H. wishes U.S. to join, 526.  
 Lee, FitzHugh, 193.  
 Lee, George C., 269, 270, 271, 276, 288, 354, 521.  
 Lee, George C., Jr., 288.  
 Lee, Henry (I), H.'s maternal grandfather, death of, 263; 12, 14, 65, 110, 138, 341, 521.  
 Lee, Henry (II), H.'s uncle and partner, quoted on H.'s father, 10-12, and mother, 12; on Boston in the forties, 14, 15; death of, 288; letter to Mrs. Higginson on Soldiers Field Address, 334, 335; 23, 74, 78, 79, 237, 238, 269, 276, 282, 286, 304, 389, 433, 521. *Letters from H. to*, 332, 339, 343, 370, 371; *letters to H.*, 340, 341, 342, 344.  
 Lee, John C., founder of Lee and Higginson, 268, 269.  
 Lee, Mary Cabot. *See Higginson, Mary Cabot (Lee).*

- Lee, Mary Jackson, H.'s maternal grandmother, 12, 14, 138, 139.  
 Lee, Robert E., 171, 173 *n.*, 186, 189, 190, 191, 194, 203, 204, 205, 231, 237, 395, 404.  
 Lee, William R., 154.  
 Lee and Higginson, 14, 77, 268, 269.  
 Lee, Higginson & Co., H. becomes a partner in, 267; origin of, described by H., 268, 269; later history of, 270 *f.*; "Black Friday," 274; and the Boston fire, 274; and the panic of 1873, 282 *f.*; H. quoted concerning later years of, 286, 287; recent changes in membership of, 288, 289; services of, in the World War, 289; H.'s talks to bond salesmen of, 289, 290.  
 Leipzig, music at, 47.  
 Levick, Sir Hugh G., *Letters from H.* to, 515, 518, 520; 455.  
 Lewis, Sir George, 398.  
 Libby Prison, 153.  
 Lincoln, Abraham, a "Massachusetts in 1860" view of him, 139; elected President, 139; his first call for troops, and its effect, 142 *f.*; accepts 2d Mass Infantry, 144, 145; issues second call, 145; A. W. Thayer's opinion of, 181; H.'s only sight of, 182; significance of his reelection, 233, 234; assassination of, 237, 243; his Gettysburg address, 370; 190, 226, 228, 232, 238, 395.  
 Lind, Jenny, 137.  
 Lippitt, George W., 124, 180.  
 Liszt, Franz, 243.  
 Livermore, Robert, 426.  
 Livermore, Thomas L., his *Days and Events*, 151, *n.*; 426, 521.  
 Lodge, Henry Cabot, his *Early Memoires* quoted, 16 *n.*; on Soldiers Field Address, 337; presides at H.'s 80th birthday dinner, 460; 59, 320, 500 *n.* *Letters from H.* to, 62, 63, 346, 361, 365, 426, 429, 445, 453, 475, 476, 502, 522, 523; *letters to H.*, 326, 427.  
 Lodge, Mrs. H. C., 523.  
 Loeffler, Martin, 318.  
 London *Times*, 111, 129, 228.  
 Longfellow, Henry W., 25, 210.  
 Longy, Georges, 295, 315.  
 Lortzing, G. A., *The Voice of Nature*, 46.  
 Low, Seth, 461.  
 Lowell, A. Lawrence, quoted, on H.'s service on Corporation, 348, and on his gift of a Princeton Fellowship, 364; 349 and *n.*, 382, 461, 526. *Letter from H.* to, 374; *letter to H.*, 489.  
 Lowell, Anna, 162, 191, 192, 200, 222.  
 Lowell, Charles Russell, boyhood friend of H., 7; H. quoted on, 82; letter of, to his mother, 103, 105; Captain in 3d U.S. Cavalry, 150; killed at Cedar Creek, 231; his funeral, 232; on Soldiers Field tablet, 332 *n.*; quoted, 527; H.'s remarks on, 532; 19, 21, 24, 26, 77 *n.*, 79, 83 and *n.*, 87, 90, 91, 92, 93, 96, 97, 98, 99, 101, 102, 104, 105, 110, 121, 125, 131, 132, 162 *n.*, 164, 168, 169, 172, 173, 186, 191, 192, 200, 206, 215, 222 *n.*, 239, 268, 390, 391, 405, 407, 421, 422, 457, 459. *Letters of, to H.*, 140, 211, 212, 21, 232.  
 Lowell, Ella, 79.  
 Lowell, Francis C., 97, 98, 201, 213, 283, 284.  
 Lowell, Francis C. (II), 349.  
 Lowell, James J., killed at Glendale, 162 *n.*; on Soldiers Field tablet, 332 *n.*; H.'s remarks on, 531; 154, 162 and *n.*, 164, 222 *n.*  
 Lowell, James R., *Biglow Papers*, 154; his Commemoration Ode, 238, 370, 518, 525; 162 *n.*, 280, 281, 400, 401. *Letters of, to H.*, 331, 332, 335.  
 Lowell, Josephine Shaw, death of, 455; 213, 222 and *n.*, 226, 335, 371, 374, 407, 428.  
 Lowell, Mrs., mother of C. R. Lowell, 81, 232.  
 Loyal Legion, the, 404, 521.  
 Lusitania, sinking of, 474, 479, 513.  
 Lyman, John P., 300, 521.  
 Lyman, Theodore, 221, 224, 404. *Letters of, to H.*, 214, 233.  
 MCADOO, WILLIAM G., 443, 445.  
 McClellan, George B., and Wellington, 169; 164, 168, 170, 175, 205, 233, 234.  
 McKim, Charles F., 407.  
 McKinley, William, 357, 427, 429, 432.  
 McNabb, Private, 199.  
 McPherson, James B., 225.  
 Maas, Louis, 299.  
 Macaulay, Thomas B., Lord, 390.  
 Madeleine, Church of the, 95.  
 Magnus, Professor, 64.  
 Malcolm, William R., 280, 455. *Letter from H.* to, 514; *letter to H.*, 452.  
 Malibran, Maria F., 137.  
 Manchester, Mass., H.'s summer home at, 275, 455.  
 Mansfield, Joseph K. F., 172.  
 Maquarre, André, 295.  
 Margaret of Anjou, Queen of Henry VI, 226.  
 Mario (Marquis of Candia), 29, 137.  
 Markoe, Mrs. John, 526.  
 Marlowe, Julia, 397.  
 Marseilles, 97.

- Martin, Edward S., 367, 369.  
 Martin, Private (2d Mass.), 153.  
 Mason, W. Powell, 21, 83, 92, 93, 94, 95, 105, 124, 128, 138.  
 Massachusetts, and the President's call for troops (1861), 143, 144; H. quoted on gathering of troops, 145, 146.  
 Massachusetts Historical Society, 521; *Proceedings of*, 201 n., 271 n.  
 Massachusetts Institute of Technology, H.'s interest in, 366, 367.  
 Massachusetts Regiments in the Civil War.  
     *First Cavalry*, H. commissioned in, 155; organization of, 156; Company A, described by H. 157; officers of, 158; in Hunter's Corps at Hilton Head, 158 f.; internal troubles in, 173, 177, 213 f., 220; movements of, in April '63, 183 f.; at Aldie Gap, 193 f.; conditions in, 230. And see Crowninshield, B. W.  
     *Second Cavalry*, organized in Boston, 174; 192.  
     *Fifth Cavalry*, 219.  
     *Second Infantry*, organized by Gordon, 144; a present from the State, 144; dating of commissions in, 145; H. enlists in, 145; recruitment of, 145 f.; H.'s friends in, 146, 147; at Brook Farm, 147 f.; record of, 151, 155; at Harper's Ferry (1861), 151, 152; at Cedar Mountain, 164, 165, 166, 168, 169; at Gettysburg, 204; reunion of, in 1911, 404.  
     *Twentieth Infantry*, at Ball's Bluff, 153, 154.  
     *Fifty-fourth (colored) Infantry*, sails from Boston, 193; at Fort Wagner, 206; 177, 192.  
 Mather, Cotton, quoted, 2, 3; his *Magnalia*, 4.  
 Meade, George G., 191, 203, 204, 205, 214, 224, 237.  
 "Med. Fac." episode at Harvard, H.'s view of, 367 f.  
 Mendelssohn, Felix, *Athalie*, 47; *Edipus*, 54.  
 Mercier, Cardinal, 526.  
 Meyer, Madame, 56, 57, 64.  
 Meyerbeer, Giacomo, *Le Prophète*, 54, 63; *Robert le Diable*, 54; *Les Huguenots*, 63.  
 Michigan Central R.R. Co., 273.  
 Middlesex School, 365, 377.  
 Miles, Nelson A., 224, 225.  
 Mill, John S., *Political Economy*, 226, 244; *Essays*, 253; 390.  
 Miller, August, 124, 125, 129, 132, 165, 180, 181.  
 Miller, Eugene, 180.  
 Millet, Francis D., 279, 407.  
 Minns, Grace, *Letters from H. to*, 389, 406.  
 Minot, Harriet, 18.  
 Minot, Sarah Cabot, 18.  
 Mitchell, S. Weir, on Soldiers Field address, 337. *Letter of*, to H., 423.  
 Mitchell, Mr., 386.  
 Mitford, Mary R., 72, 73.  
 Mittewurger, singer, 56, 63.  
 Mobile Bay, 231.  
 Moors, John F., 349 n.  
 Morgan, J. Pierpont, 239, 464.  
 Morgan, J. Pierpont, Jr., *Letter from H. to*, 464.  
 Morley, John (Viscount), *Recollections*, 390; 304.  
 Morristown School, 365.  
 Morse, Charles F., his *Letters Written during the Civil War*, 190 n.; at Cottenham, 248, 250, 253, 254, 255, 256, 266; 146, 147, 204, 205, 264 n., 276, 336.  
 Morse, Charles J., 18.  
 Morse, E. Rollins, 18.  
 Morse, Frances R., *Letter from H. to*, 298, 299.  
 Morse, Harriet Lee, H.'s aunt, 52, 75, and n. *Letters from H. to*, 51, 137, 138; *letter to H.*, 72.  
 Morse, John T., his *Memoir of Henry Lee*, 10-12, 157, 269 n.; quoted, 13; his sketch of H., 201 n., 271, 272, 273; quoted on Soldiers Field address, 333; 403.  
 Morse, Lucy, 18.  
 Motley, J. Lothrop, letter of, to Henry Lodge, regarding H.'s being ordered to leave Dresden, 59-62; his *Dutch Republic*, 78; 49 and n., 54, 55, 62, 149, 178, 180.  
 Motley, Mrs. J. Lothrop, 57, 78, 180.  
 Motley, Mary, 178, 180.  
 Motley, Thomas L., 146, 158, 220.  
 Motor-cars, H.'s attitude toward, 389.  
 Mounet-Sully, Jean, as Hamlet, 396, 397.  
 Mozart, Wolfgang A., *Figaro's Wedding*, 45; *Don Giovanni*, 46; *Requiem*, 58; 47, 392.  
 Muck, Karl, fifth conductor of Symphony Orchestra, 293, 294, 296, 305; the Kaiser reluctant to release him, 319 and n., 320; H. quoted on, 319, 320; his position in Germany, 319; his second engagement in Boston, 293, 321 f.; P. Hale quoted on his conductorship, 321, 322; and the Orchestra during the World War, 469 f.; his status as an alien, 482, 484.

- 485, 495; his indispensableness to the Orchestra, 482, 483, 484, 493; and the "Star-Spangled Banner," 487; offers to resign, 487; clamor for dismissal of, 490 *f.*, 497, 498; notified of termination of his engagement, 500, 501; arrested and interned as an alien enemy, 501 *f.*; his base personal character, 501; 407, 519, 520.
- Muck, Mrs. Karl, 500.
- Munich, opera in, 45, 46; the Glyptothek, 46; 43, 44.
- Murray, Gilbert, Letter of, to H., on relations between England and U.S., 508, 509.
- Music, H. quoted on, 66, 67; advantages of Vienna for studying, 106 *f.*, 109.
- Musical Fund Society, 297, 323.
- Musicians' Protective Union, its opposition to admission of Nikisch to U.S. marks beginning of H.'s long struggle with, 310; H.'s attitude toward, 310 and *n.*; its sleepless hostility to the Orchestra, 312; 470.
- NAPOLEON I, 86.
- Napoleon III, 78, 95.
- Negroes at Cottonham, 252, 253, 254, 255, 256, 257, 259, 260, 262, 264, 265.
- New England, changes in commercial and industrial life of, 132.
- New York, great fire of 1836, 5; Symphony Orchestra at (March, 1918), 498.
- Niagara Falls, "peace" conference at (1864), 226.
- Nikisch, Arthur, third conductor of Symphony Orchestra, 293, 303, 305 *n.*, 306, 311; correspondence of H. and Dresel concerning, 306 *f.*; his admission to U.S. opposed by Musicians Union, 310; 520.
- North, the, discouragement at, in summer of 1864, 228.
- Northern Pacific R.R., 283.
- Norton, Charles E., on H.'s Soldiers Field address, 333; 98, 101, 210, 250.
- Norton, Richard, 370, 371.
- O'CONNELL, WILLIAM, CARDINAL, 407.
- Officers' Club, members of, 404 and *n.*
- Olmsted, Frederick Law, *The Seaboard Slave States*, 250.
- Oppolzer, Dr., treats H. in Vienna, 121, 122.
- Ord, Edward O. C., 222.
- Orpheus Singing Society, 80.
- Osborne, Dr., 183, 198.
- Ostend, 31.
- PAGE, WALTER H., 424.
- Paine, Charles J., 24, 76, 273, 287, 437, 521.
- Paine, Robert T., 21, 24, 90, 105.
- Paine, William C., 21.
- Palfrey, Francis W., 172.
- Panama Tolls Act, repeal of, 478.
- Panic, of 1857; 112 *f.*; of 1873, 282 *f.*; of 1893, 286, 338 and *n.*, 339 *f.*; of 1907, 287.
- Paris, in 1856, 95; music and drama in, 137; 71.
- Parker, H. T., "Thirty Years of the Boston Symphony Orchestra," 311 and *n.*, 320.
- Parker, Theodore, 133.
- Parkman, Francis, 402, 403.
- Parsons, Theophilus, 25.
- Parsons, Lieutenant, 195.
- Paton, Lucy A., her *Elizabeth Cary Agassiz*, 210, 327, 328 and *n.*
- Patterson, Robert, 151.
- Patti, Adelina, 285.
- Paur, Emil, fourth conductor of Symphony Orchestra, 293, 305 *n.*, 311.
- Peabody, Andrew P., 337.
- Peabody, Elizabeth, 21.
- Peabody, Ephraim, 18 and *n.*, 30 and *n.*, 395.
- Peabody, George L., 288.
- Pearson, Henry G., his *John Murray Forbes*, 283 and *n.*
- Peel, Sir Robert, 18.
- Peirce, Benjamin, 25.
- Peirce, James M., 79.
- Peirson, Charles L., 336, 404.
- Peirson, M'le, 280.
- Perkins, Charles E., 234, 275, 287, 431, 454. *Letters of*, to H., 412, 433-435, 436, 437.
- Perkins, Edith (Forbes), 275.
- Perkins, Stephen G., killed at Cedar Mountain, 165 and *n.*, 166 and *n.*; on Soldiers Field tablet, 332 *n.*; H.'s remarks on, 532; 24, 25, 26, 39, 73, 77 and *n.*, 80, 82, 83, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 101, 147, 150, 152, 167, 185, 206, 222 *n.*, 232, 390, 405, 459.
- Perkins, T. Handasyd, 209.
- Perkins, Thomas N., 349 *n.*
- Perry, Bliss, *Letters from H. to*, 377 *n.*, 391, 404, 457 *n.*
- Perry, John, 199, 200.
- Perry, Thomas S., 403.
- Philharmonic Society, 297, 299, 323.
- Philippine Islands, H.'s view of retention of, 428 *f.*; W. James on, 429.
- Phillips, Wendell, 23, 395.
- Pierce, Franklin, nominated for President, 76, and elected, 77.

## INDEX

- Pleasonton, Alfred, 168, 184, 193, 215.  
 Politics, H.'s position in, 432, 433.  
 Pope, John, 165, 167, 168.  
 Prague, 58.  
 Pratt, Bela, his portrait bust of H., 317.  
 "Preparedness," advocated by H., 477, 478.  
 Prescott, William H., 133.  
 Preston Hall, Aylesford, 285, 286.  
 Princeton University, H. gives Harvard Fellowship to, 364, 362, 365.  
 Pritchett, Henry S., *Letters from H. to, 366, 367, 378, 526.*  
 "Private Collegiate Instruction for Women," 327.  
 Progressive legislation, H.'s attitude toward, 425.  
 Providence, R.I., and the Symphony Orchestra, 486, 487.  
 Prussia, and France, H. prophesies concerning, 281.  
 Prussian idea of government, 477.  
 Prussian navy, in 1853, 70.  
 Public ownership, H. quoted on, 449.  
 Pulaski, Fort, attack on, 161.  
 Pullman cars, first train of, 275.  
 Pumpelly, Raphael, 403, 411.  
 Puritanism, H. quoted on, 327.  
 Putnam, James J., his *Memoir of Dr. James Jackson*, 15 n.  
 Putnam, Mary Lowell, 177 n. Letter of, to H., 335.  
 Putnam, Samuel R., 97, 98, 105.  
 Putnam, William L., 97, 154, 162 n., 177 n.  
 Putnam Camp (Adirondacks), 455.  
 QUINCY, EDMUND, his *Life of Josiah Quincy*, 16.  
 Quincy, Samuel M., 146, 147, 165, 189.  
 Quint, Alonzo H., historian of 2d Mass. Infantry, 147 and n.; *The Potomac and the Rapidan*, 150, 151.  
 RABAUD, M., interim conductor of Symphony Orchestra, 519.  
 Racine, Jean, 47.  
 Radcliffe College, H.'s association with, 328; 327.  
 Railroad situation, the, in 1907, Roosevelt on, 435; C. E. Perkins on, 436, 437.  
 Rand, Arnold A., 158, 521.  
 Raphael Sanzio, the Sistine Madonna, 54.  
 Readville, Mass., 1st Mass. Cavalry mustered in at, 156 ff.  
 Reeder, Andrew H., 88.  
 Regnier, M., 396.  
 Reichemberg, M'ile, 280.  
 Revere, Paul, 153, 172.  
 Revolution of 1848, 7.  
 Rhodes, James F., his *History of the Civil War*, 173 n., 190 n.; his *History of the U.S.*, 282, 283; 403. *Letters from H. to, 402 n., 459, 517.*  
 Rich men, H. quoted on duties of, 440, 441, 446, 447, 451 ff.  
 Richter, Hans, and the Symphony Orchestra, 310; 303, 311.  
 Richter, Jean Paul, 391.  
 Ripley, Elizabeth, 21.  
 "Rock Harbor." See Westport.  
 "Rock Harbor Journals," 455.  
 Rockefeller, John D., 452.  
 Rodin, H. Adams on, 418, 419; 390, 407.  
 Rogers, W. B., 166, 405, 406.  
 Rogers, Mrs. W. B., 191, 192, 335.  
 Rogers, Mr., owner of Cottonham plantation, 248, 249, 252, 264 and n.  
 Rome, visit to, 98 ff.; the Campagna, 100; St. Peter's and St. Mark (Venice), 102.  
 Roosevelt, Theodore, as possible president of Harvard, 359 ff.; W. James on, in that connection, 360, 361; his speech in the Harvard Union, and its effect, 361, 362; H. quoted on, 438, 439, 441, 442; 337, 357, 405, 407, 422, 425, 432, 479. *Letters to H.*, 358, 435, 505, 506.  
 Root, Elihu, 320, 407, 474, 517, 524. *Letter to H.*, 506.  
 Ropes, John C., 402 n., 403.  
 Rosser, General, 194, 196 and n.  
 Rufinatscha, 180, 181.  
 Rügen, Island of, 69, 70, 71.  
 Russell, Anna, marries Alexander Agassiz, 210. And see Agassiz, Anna.  
 Russell, Henry S., 146, 147, 165, 235, 237, 404. *Letter to H.*, 219, 220.  
 Russell, Mrs. Henry S., 235.  
 SABINE, WALLACE C., 356.  
 Sadony, P., 295.  
 Saint-Gaudens, Augustus, 206, 316, 317, 407.  
 St. Gotthard Pass, 32.  
 St. Mark, Gospel of, 253.  
 St. Paul's Cathedral (London), service at (April, 1917), 510.  
 Salem church, 2.  
 Salignac Drill Club, 145.  
 Salisbury, Marquis of, 418.  
 Samson, Joseph I., 396.  
 Sanborn, Frank B., 82, 87, 88, 89, 90, 133.  
 Sand, George, *Consuelo*, 96.  
 Sanitary Commission, 174.  
 Santayana, George, his *Character and Opinion in the U.S.*, quoted, 350, 351.

- Santiago, model school at, 428.  
 Sargent, Horace B., Lieutenant-Colonel of 1st Mass. Cavalry, 157; promoted to colonel with unhappy results, 173; 208, 209, 214, 216, 217, 218.  
 Sargent, John S., his portrait of H. in Harvard Union, 358 and n., 385, 420 and n.  
 Sargent, Lucius M., in 1st Mass. Cavalry, 157; 147, 158, 168, 194, 195, 197, 198, 208.  
 Saturday Club, 3, 400, 401, 402, and n.  
 Savage, James, Senior, 146 n.  
 Savage, James, boyhood friend of H., 7; H. on, 82; killed at Cedar Mountain, 165, 166 and n.; on Soldiers' Field tablet, 332 n.; H.'s remarks on, 532; 19, 21, 24, 73, 81, 90, 143, 145, 146, 147, 152, 162, 191, 206, 222 n., 405, 406, 459.  
 Schiff, Jacob, 454.  
 Schlesinger, Sebastian B., 275.  
 Schmidt, Louis, interim conductor of Symphony Orchestra, 501, 502.  
 Schubert, Franz P., 392.  
 Schuck, Herr (Dresden), 310.  
 Schumann, Robert, "The Rose of Pilgerfähr," 54.  
 Schurz, Carl, quoted, 181, 182.  
 Scott, Sir Walter, 96.  
 Scott, Winfield, nominated for president, 76; defeated, 77.  
 Sea Islands, 251.  
 Second Church (Boston), 15.  
 Sedgwick, Arthur G., 221 and n., 227, 403.  
 Sedgwick, John, 225.  
 Sedgwick, William D., fatally wounded at Antietam, 172; 55, 146, 147, 149, 152, 171, 201.  
 Sewall, Samuel, 4.  
 Seward, William H., 136, 139, 231, 243.  
 Shakespeare, William, *Hamlet* in German, 56; H. advises his sister on reading, 96; *Henry VI*, 226; *Much Ado about Nothing*, 391; 390.  
 Shattuck, Frederick C., 379, 380.  
 Shaw, Josephine, 192, 211, 212. And see Lowell, Josephine Shaw.  
 Shaw, Lemuel, 25.  
 Shaw, Pauline (Agassiz), death of, 521; 210.  
 Shaw, Quincy A., marries Pauline Agassiz, 210; and the Calumet and Hecla mines, 263, 264, 272; 276, 421, 433.  
 Shaw, Robert G., quoted, 165; on Soldiers' Field tablet, 332 n.; H.'s Memorial Day (1897) address on, 371, 414; H.'s remarks on, 531, 532; 146, 147, 177, 188, 191, 192, 212, 222 n., 232.  
 Shaw, Mrs. Robert G., 191.  
 Shaw Memorial, W. James's dedication of, 414.  
 Shays' Rebellion, 4.  
 Sheafe, William, 240, 241. *Letters to H.*, 244, 245, 246.  
 Shepard, John, 386.  
 Sheridan, Philip H., quoted on C. R. Lowell, 232; 231.  
 Sherman, William T., his march to the sea, 231; his *Memoirs*, 250; 228, 237.  
 Sherman Anti-Trust law, 437.  
 Shuecker, Heinrich, 295.  
 Sigel, Franz, 190.  
 Sill, E. R., "The Fool's Prayer," 369.  
 Silver Purchase clause of Sherman law, repealed, 338, 342.  
 Slavery question, in 1850, 8, and in 1853, 83; change of sentiment of men of 2d Mass. Infantry, regarding, 150, 151 and n.  
 Smith, William F., 224.  
 Soldiers Field, H. gives land for, 330; purpose of the gift, 330, 331; Lowell's suggested inscription for tablet on, 331; H.'s address to students concerning, 332, 333, 362, 363, 371, 382, 454, 529-536; copy of inscription on tablet, 332 n.; 3, 162 n., 347, 349.  
 Solferino, battle of, 128.  
 Sontag, Henriette, 75, 77, 78, 137.  
 Sophocles, Evangelinus A., 25, 336.  
 South, the, conditions in, after the Civil War, 247; attitude of, toward Reconstruction, 253.  
 South Mountain, battle of, 169-171.  
 Spanish-American War, H.'s attitude toward, 425 ff.  
 Sparks, Jared, 24.  
 Spectator, the, 96.  
 Spohr, Louis, *Jessonda*, 45, 56, 57.  
 Stanton, Edwin M., 175.  
 "Star-Spangled Banner, The," at Symphony concerts, 485-487, 488, 489.  
 Stark, John, 340.  
 Stettin, 70.  
 Stevens, Thaddeus, 247.  
 Stevenson, Robert H., 404 n., 458.  
 Stevenson, Robert L., 5.  
 Stiles, Mr., U.S. Consul at Vienna, 126.  
 Stillé, Charles J., 186.  
 Stone, Lincoln R., 147, 200, 336. *Letters from H. to*, 404, 405.  
 Stoneman, George, 185, 186, 189, 190.  
 Storey, Moorfield, 403.  
 Storrow, James J., Senior, 287.  
 Storrow, James J., Jr., 288.  
 Storrow, Lydia, 282.  
 Story, William W., 99.  
 Stowe, Harriet B., her *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, 262; 98.

- Strahleck Pass, adventurous trip on, 33-36.
- Strauss, Eduard, 392.
- Strauss, Johann, 281.
- Stuart, J. E. B., 176, 187, 193, 195.
- Submarine Signal Co., 448.
- Sumner, Charles, Brooks's assault on, 126; "The Barbarism of Slavery," 136 and n.; 84, 175, 190, 247.
- Sumner, Edwin V., 172.
- Sumter, Fort, fired on, 140, 141, 145.
- Survey, The*, H.'s article, "Consider the Other Fellow," in, and replies thereto, 446.
- Switzerland, tramping in, 31 f.
- Symphony Hall, Orchestra removes to, in 1900, 312; cost of, 312; financial status of, 312; deficit assumed by H., 312; 294.
- Symphony Orchestra, founding of, 289, 297 f., idea of, when first conceived by H., 291; history of, in address by H. to members, in 1914, 291, 296; conductors of, to 1914, 293; system of pensions, 293, 312; deficit in budget of, 294; announcement of plans of, 298; Friday "rehearsals," 298, 317; first members of, 299; the first season, 299, 300; concerts in Cambridge and elsewhere, 300; firmly established in third season, 300, 301; library for, selected by Henschel, 302 and n.; H. on management and direction of, 307 f.; contracts with members of, 308 and n.; difficulty in finding successor to Nikisch, 310, 311; jealousies in, 315; H.'s personal relations with members of, 315; close of H.'s connection with, 322 f., 498, 499, 500, 502; H.'s plan to endow, 462, 463; cost of, to H., 463, 517; history of, during the war, 469-476, 478, 479-505; H.'s address to (1914) 470-472; nationality of members of, 484; threatened break-up of, over question of Muck's retention, 483, 484, 488 f.; work of, reviewed in letter to Gericke, 519; H.'s farewell address to, 503-505; at H.'s funeral, 527; 365, 400. And see Musicians' Protective Union, Muck, "Star-Spangled Banner."
- TAFT, WILLIAM H., 425, 432, 438, 440, 442, 461, 474, 479. *Letter to H.*, 505.
- Tagore, Rabindranath, 266.
- Tamberlik, Enrico, 29, 30.
- Taney, Roger B., his opinion in Dred Scott case, 110.
- Tappan, Caroline (Sturgis), 97, 98, 100, 102.
- Tappan, William, 97, 100.
- Taussig, Francis W., quoted, on raising funds for Harvard School of Business Administration, 375-377. *Letter from H. to*, 447; *letter to H.*, 450.
- Tavern Club, farewell dinner to Gericke at, 305, 306; H. president of, 401, 402; records of, quoted, on H., 402; 3, 400, 460, 519, 520.
- Taylor, Jeremy, *Tracts and Sermons*, 78.
- Taylor, Moses, 175.
- Taylor, Lieutenant-Colonel, 186.
- Tschaikowski, Peter I., 392.
- Temple, Frederick, Archbishop of Canterbury, 394.
- Tewksbury, Captain, 193.
- Thackeray, William M., lectures in Boston, 80 n.; *The Virginians*, 129, 8, 185.
- Thayer, A. W., his opinion of Lincoln, 181; 127, 178; *Letter from H. to*, 179; *letter to H.*, 181.
- Thayer, Ezra R., 521.
- Thayer, James B., 24, 73.
- Thayer, William Roscoe, "father of the Union," 351 and n., 355 n.; 461.
- Thiers, Adolphe, 41.
- Thillon, Anna, 77, 78.
- Thomas, Theodore, his orchestra in Boston, 297; 480.
- Thomson, Samuel, 409.
- Thoreau, Henry D., 91.
- Ticknor, George, 98.
- Ticknor, George, Life and Letters of*, quoted, 16, 17.
- Tolstoy, Leo, *War and Peace*, 167.
- Tompkins, Mr., 388.
- Tower, Charlemagne, 320, 321, 407.
- Truffi, Madame, 78.
- Turgenev, Ivan, *Fathers and Children*, 72, 80; 286.
- Turner, J. M. W., 93.
- Tweedie, Mrs., 192.
- Twichell, Joseph H., *Letter of*, to H., 362.
- Tyler, Moses Coit, 3.
- Tyrol, the, tramping in, 41; 103, 104.
- UNION CLUB, Boston, 86, 87.
- Union Pacific R.R., 282, 283.
- Union Safe Deposit Vaults, the first in Boston, 270; and the fire of 1872, 276, 277.
- United States, conditions in, Nov., 1860, to April, 1861, 140, 141; after the firing on Fort Sumter, 142 f.; traditional policy of, in relation to European affairs, 465 and n.; H.'s view of proper policy of, in 1914-15, 467, 474, 475, 476; and England, relations of, reviewed by Gilbert

